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No. 379.

\$2.50
a Year.

Published Weekly by Beadle and Adams,
No. 98 WILLIAM ST. NEW YORK.

Price,
Five Cents.

VOL. XXX.

DICK, THE STOWAWAY.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.



"SO, YOUNG ONE," HE ROARED, "YOU'RE TRYING TO STEAL A FREE PASSAGE ABOARD THIS GOOD SHIP, HEY? DO YOU KNOW WHAT WE GENERALLY DO WITH STOWAWAYS?"

Dick, the Stowaway;

OR,

A Yankee Boy's Strange Cruise.

BY CHARLES MORRIS,

AUTHOR OF "WILL WILDFIRE," "THE BOSS BOY,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A MIDNIGHT SCARE.

"OUCH!"

Such was the exclamation that suddenly broke out in the sharp tones of a youthful voice.

"Cricky! What's that? Ain't nobody touchin' a coal o' fire to my big toe?"

There was a hasty scamper of light feet, and all sunk again into silence.

The boy, who had been rudely wakened from a deep sleep, rubbed his eyes, and strove to penetrate the thick darkness surrounding him, while he felt his toes to see if they were all in place.

"Five on both feet. Two big toes fur tally. Ain't none on 'em absquatulated," he continued, in more cautious tones. "But it's lucky I waked up jist then, or ther moughtn't been nothin' left o' me but my right ear. I've got a perspirin' notion as it's rats. Don't I wish to Moses I had a ounce bottle full of daylight down here! 'Spect they'll go fur my nose next time, 'cause it's handy, and it's a pretty specimen of a chimpanzee I'd be without no nose."

He rolled over on his rough bed, and felt around him in the darkness. He was stretched upon a heap of hard canvas bags, hardly more comfortable than so many cobble-stones. Above him, within easy reach of his hands as he lay, were the rough timbers of some sort of a frame ceiling, with thick cross-beams. All around him was utter darkness, and an odor that was far from agreeable. But there were two odd peculiarities about this bed. Instead of resting quiet, as a respectable bed should, it was constantly pitching and tossing, as if an earthquake was passing beneath. And from outside there came a continued swishing noise, a peculiar sound, that is never heard upon dry land.

The fact was that the waters of the broad Atlantic lay beneath the boy's couch, and the sound heard was the wash of ocean billows against the sides of a stout ship, that was laboring onward through a heavy sea.

"A feller mought as well try to sleep on a wood-pile, with hogs rootin' under it, and bed-bugs as big as cocoanuts a-goin' fur his corporation," growled the boy, as he felt for a more comfortable spot. "I'd guv a cow and a can of buttermilk jist now to be back in old York, a-sleepin' on a Battery bench, or a-bikin' down Broadway with the boys. If this here craft goes to the bottom what's to come of me, I'd like to know?"

As there was nobody to answer his question, and he could think of no satisfactory answer himself, he turned over and tried to get to sleep again, first hiding his toes under the edge of a

bag to preserve them from the rats. It was no very agreeable sleeping apartment, but he was used to roughing it, and in ten minutes was as sound asleep as if he had been in a state bed in a palace.

Leaving him to finish his slumber as far as the rats will permit, we must seek the upper deck of the good ship Wildwing, and see what sort of a night is aboard.

It was almost as dark on deck as under hatches. Heavy cloud masses swept across the upper sky. The wind came in sharp puffs, that whistled through the rigging and strained the bellying sails. The billows of a rough sea beat against the ship's stout sides and lifted her upon their foaming peaks, as they rolled ever onward. The ship's lights touched the gleam of the white-capped waves, giving them a lurid, ghostly effect. Hard drops of rain pattered upon the deck. It was decidedly a wild night.

A few figures were dimly visible on deck. There was no need for more than the regular night watch, for the gale was in its decline, and the good ship nobly obeyed her helm, plunging through the foaming sea without yielding an inch from her course.

The captain came up the companionway and took a hasty but shrewd observation of the scene.

"How's her head now, helmsman?" he shouted, in a voice that pierced the storm.

"East-nor'east," growled back the old sea-dog at the helm.

"Ease her a point, then. She wants a trifle more easting.—The heart of the gale has blown out, Mr. Blake." This was addressed to the officer of the deck.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "It has been going down since noon. We'll have the Atlantic as smooth as a duck-pond in another twenty-four hours."

"By the way"—the captain's voice sunk lower—"how is it with that rascally nonsense of the men? Been any ghost-seeing to-night?"

"Not a whiff."

"And this is the night for it, if there ever was one. Hang their superstitious folderol! I'd like to swash it out of them with a few buckets of bilge water."

"I don't know about that, captain," answered the officer, doubtfully. "I saw something queer myself in my last night watch. I was standing on this very spot, and— Hello! what's that? Look there!"

He pointed with his right hand across the deck at the object which had so suddenly attracted his attention. There appeared through the gloom the outlines of a shadowy, ghostly figure, of diminutive size, that was gliding stealthily across the leeward deck.

"Thunder and blazes! That's your ghost, eh?" ejaculated the captain, as he sprung hastily toward the figure.

Mr. Blake followed. But at the same instant the ship lurched heavily upon a passing billow. The two officers, unprepared for this, were sent reeling across the deck. When they had recovered their equilibrium and looked again for the object of their quest, it had disappeared. Only themselves and the men forward were visible.

Captain Hastings hastily strode forward and accosted the men in an angry tone:

"Which of you was it that was masquerading amidships just now? By the Lord, I'll make the jackanapes acquainted with the weight of a tarred rope!"

"None on us, sir," answered an old sailor, touching his cap. "We haven't stirred a step from the fo'castle. What did you see, captain?" he continued, curiously.

The captain looked sharply into the eager faces of the men. It was evident that they were all innocent. He turned shortly away.

"Nothing, Jack," he replied, in a careless tone. "I got wakened too quickly out of my sleep, I fancy. Keep your weather eye open, and if you see anything suspicious, snap on to it."

He turned to Mr. Blake and walked back to the quarter-deck.

"The men are right, Blake," he remarked. "There's something on the Wildwing that's not down on the ship's books. And I'm bound to ferret out what it is. Keep a keen lookout. It may show itself again."

He turned and went below, leaving Mr. Blake again in charge of the deck. The latter person was somewhat superstitious, and it was with a shrinking step that he approached the spot where the figure had disappeared, hardly expecting to see a shadowy specter. But the faint light of the ship's lamps only revealed emptiness and solitude.

Still the ship reeled before the storm, the wind howled in gusts through the rigging, the white-capped waves tossed their foam upon the deck. All this was an old song to the sailors, and they little heeded the darkness and the storm. But no sailor ever got accustomed to the idea of the supernatural, and the momentary excitement of the captain had roused a tenfold excitement in the men. They argued that there must be something uncanny aboard when a hard-headed old water spaniel like Captain Hastings had been shaken from his sea legs by it.

This scene had taken place at a much later hour than that on which we saw the boy crouched upon his hard bed. The night was some four hours older, and the first rays of morning were due in the east in a couple of hours more.

By paying a second visit to the boy's sleeping-apartment we may gain some clearer idea of the ghostly apparition which had so startled the captain and the watch.

The lad sat upright upon the hard bags, with some object grasped in each hand, while a silent but eager burst of merriment convulsed his young frame.

"Cracky, but that there was a narrer squeak!" he ejaculated. "It's lucky I've larnt how to hide in a knot hole. I jist s'pose they'd be fur pilin' me overboard if they cotched me; but they ain't goin' to nab this weasel easy. Anyhow I've got some grub and water, and I'm hunky fur another day."

He concealed his prizes in the cracks between the bags, they consisting of a loaf of bread and a bottle of water, which he had captured in the cook's galley.

"Wouldn't the Bowery boys jist go wild if

they knowed that Dusty Dick was playin' spook aboard a big ship, and skeerin' the cap'n and crew wuss nor a whale? Oh, lawsee! I ain't had sich fun since I sewed Bill Blank up in a boss blanket, and hung him out on a meat-hook in Fulton Market! But if I git cotched won't they salt me? Anyhow they've got to cotch me fust, and I guess I'll have my snooze out."

In a few minutes more he was fast asleep again, despite the rolling of the ship, to which he had grown pretty well accustomed during his many days' residence in that contracted den. And while he slept the night passed away, and morning dawned upon the sea.

The heavy clouds which had been sending down their pattering rains during the night, thinned and broke soon after sunrise, and the rays of the sun gleamed through upon the heaving ocean. It was a magnificent scene as the red light fell in a long avenue upon the foaming tops of the wildly tossing waves, gilding them with the rich glory of the sunrise.

The sea was still rough, and an occasional sharp puff of wind tore across the billows, and swelled out the close-reefed sails. But the storm had blown itself out, and these were but its expiring breaths.

"Lay aloft there, and shake out those reefs," cried Captain Hastings, in a stentorian voice. "Make full sail. These cat's-paws of wind will die out in an hour, and we'll have it as mild as May. Put her head due east, helmsman. We've made too much northing during the night."

The men sprung aloft to obey, and soon the reef knots were loosed, the yards hauled taut, and the ship, feeling her increased spread of canvas, plunged her nose into the seas ahead, and darted onward with new speed. She was well out on her course, and the coast of Ireland was expected to loom up into sight within a day or two more.

"We're good for Liverpool and a market, Mr. Blake," remarked the captain to his first officer. "In spite of your ghost. But there was something confoundedly curious about the way that thing slid out of sight. I've my notion about it, and I'll bet you something nice that I nab your spook before we're two days older."

The cook is growling about some of the men being in his caboose last night," said Mr. Blake.

"Aha! So the ghost has been abroad on a grub patrol. It must be a substantial phantom that travels about on a bread and meat diet."

During the succeeding night a sharp lookout was kept for the mysterious figure. But it proved without effect. No signs of the specter were visible. In fact Dick did not venture abroad. He had laid in enough provisions to last him, with economy, for two days, and concluded to avoid risks. Another day passed, and another night succeeded. His loaf had run out ten hours before. He cared little for this, however, for he was not troubled about provisions. But his water-bottle was empty also, and it was impossible to get along without water. It was necessary to venture on deck again.

The night was well advanced when he woke from a sound slumber. He looked inquiringly

around him. It was pitch dark, showing that it was still night, for a faint light invaded his hiding-place during the day. He commenced to slowly creep toward the stern end of the ship.

He had not gone far in this direction ere he found himself against a bulkhead, with the cargo heaped against it almost to the deck timbers. Feeling his way he quickly discovered a small opening between this partition and the deck, through which he squeezed himself with some difficulty. The place in which he now found himself was laden with barrels, and other merchandise. Still picking his way aft, it was not long ere he reached a narrow door that led to the cabin. This was locked but Dick seemed provided with a key, for in a moment he had it open, and was cautiously surveying the cabin.

All here was still and deserted! A turned-down lamp shed a faint light, by which the boy carefully viewed the surroundings before moving. He then crept onward more cautiously than ever, stole silently up the companion stair, and took a quiet survey of the ship's deck, while he drew in long breaths of the cool night air.

No one was near, and in an instant he glided to the deck, and crept forward, under cover of various articles which afforded shelter.

The voices of the men came to his ears as he continued his progress, but he managed to keep out of sight. But it was not possible to go forward under cover. There was a clear space of deck which must be crossed, and Dick, after a moment's hesitation, started to his feet, and darted with a quick but silent step across to the next place of shelter. It was a bold move, but it proved a failure. There came a loud cry:

"Here he is! Here goes the ghost! Snatch him, boys, and we'll see what sort of shadow he is made of."

Dick darted back like a flash to his cover. There came a quick rush, and the voices of angry and excited men.

"Where is he? Gone again! By heaven, it's not flesh and blood! I saw it a minute ago, and now it has vanished!"

The men hung back in dismay as these words came from Mr. Blake. They were ready to swear that the form had faded into mist before their very eyes.

Dick, in fact, had darted aft like a rabbit behind his cover. Crouching low as he ran he made for the companionway. But what was his dismay to see the burly form and stern face of Captain Hastings vaguely illuminated by the glow of the cabin light! He had fallen into a trap from which only quickness and shrewdness could extricate him. Dick however was a lad of ready wit. Snatching up a bunch of oakum that lay close to his hand, he flung it with a quick aim into the captain's broad face. Just as the latter had caught a glimpse of a dim, gliding figure, the swashing mass took him in the eyes, causing him to hastily retreat a step, while a harsh oath came from his bearded lips.

The next minute the ship gave a wide lurch, and fell rapidly off before the wind, while the cordage creaked and the canvas flapped as if a sudden gale had blown through the rigging.

In fact the helmsman, with his senses sharpened by the hue and cry for the ghost, had been

startled out of his wits by what seemed to his wild fancy a winged griffin flying suddenly before his face. The thing, whatever it was, had almost touched him, and losing the wheel he sprung wildly forward over the binnacle light, uttering a shrill cry of alarm. The ship left to steer herself, instantly fell off before the wind, with the results above mentioned.

"What in the blazes has broke loose?" yelled Mr. Blake, the first mate. "To the sheets, men! Haul and make fast! Take the wheel, Jack Brace, and kick that confounded fool overboard! Fetch her up to the wind with a run! We're not bound for the Cape of Good Hope."

Taking his own advice he darted aft, and commenced kicking the frightened helmsman in a fury of rage, at the same moment that the captain reached the deck, swearing like a madman.

At the same time Jack Brace sprung to the wheel, and the men of the night watch to the lines, none of them having eyes for the alert figure that darted forward under the shadow of the lee bulwarks. Dick had flung off his ragged coat, and extended it like wings from his body on flashing past the helmsman in his flight. It was this that had so scared that superstitious worthy.

The captain stood in front of the companionway. There was no escape in that direction. But the entrance to the forecastle stood open and unguarded. Dick was about to plunge into this refuge when he heard some of the men, roused by the tumult on deck, coming hastily up the ladder.

He drew back behind the shelter of the foremast until these men had gained the deck, and moved hastily aft. Then the fugitive sprung lightly for the opening, and descended like a flash into the depths of the forecastle. All around him was utter darkness. There was no sign nor sound of man present. Dick breathed more freely.

"Jiminy! but that was a breather!" he ejaculated. "Didn't I giv them a high old race! Lucky I know the way out o' this to my caboose; and I'll slide while the coast's clear."

He calculated a little hastily. For at that instant the ship felt her helm, and came rapidly up to the wind with a lurch that flung him off his feet. He would have been dashed against the ship's sides only that he was suddenly brought up all standing, by a pair of rough arms that clasped him in a bear-like embrace.

"Hold your level, shipmate," came a voice like the growl of a nor'-wester. "It's old Bob Backstay that's nabbed you, and he's a chap as don't let go easy. Be quiet before I tap ye."

Dick ceased his struggles at this gruff admonition. He might as well have tried to escape from an iron vise.

CHAPTER II.

BOB BACKSTAY'S YOUNG PROTEGE.

"Let's see what sort of a night-hawk this is," growled Dick's captor. "The ship's tuk on some show of a mermaid, or the like, that's skeerin' the crew into mummies, and I'm bound to circumnavigate its length and breadth."

As he tried to strike a match for the purpose of investigating his captive, Dick made a desperate effort to squirm out of his grasp. But he only brought a love tap from the old tar's hard knuckles, that stretched him prostrate on the deck.

"Lay still there now, will ye?" growled the sailor, setting his foot on the boy's breast while he struck the match.

Its fizzing light revealed a ragged little vagrant, with a face so smirched with tar and grime that it was almost impossible to make out the features. He lay crouched into a confused heap, his face looking pleadingly up to his captor.

"Oh! won't you let me go, Mr. Blackbeard?" he piteously begged. "I ain't done no nothin'; and the cap'n'll fling me overboard if he catches me. I know that's what they do with stowaways. But I hadn't nary a shiner, and I wanted so bad to git t'other side the waters, Mr. Blackbeard."

"Backstay, you ugly son of a sea-cook!" roared the old sailor. "Bob Backstay is my name. Don't you fit me out ag'in with sich a piratical handle as Blackbeard, or I'll chuck you overboard, and save the captain the trouble."

"Won't you let me go, Mr. Bob? I won't let nobody see me ag'in till the ship gits ashore."

"Drop your mister, you cargo rat! I ain't a cap'n, or a first luff, to be mistered. So ye're a stowaway, eh? And it's you as has been skeer-in' the crew out o' their seven wits? May I be keelhaunched if I didn't 'spect as much," and the old fellow broke out into a hoarse laugh. "Here, git up, and give a 'count of yerself."

Dick, released, scrambled hastily to his feet, and looked around him like a cornered rat, as if ready to make another break for freedom.

"Who are you, and what brung you here?" demanded Bob.

"I'm a New York boy," answered Dick. "I'm goin' out to see the world. Didn't have no money to take a cabin passage, so I tuk a berth atop the cargo. But I ain't cost the ship nothin'. If you'll jist let me go nobody else'll ever know I've been aboard. If the men comes back and finds me here, I know my cake's cooked."

The weather-beaten but kindly face of the old tar broke into a grin of amusement at Dick's terror.

"You've skeered them enough. It's time they skeered you a bit," he declared. "Where have you been hidin'?"

"Atop the wheat sacks in the hold."

"Whew! That's mighty close quarters for a human critter. Nobody never thought o' huntin' stragglers there! Lord! here come the men tumblin' back! Squeeze yerself in here, little bantam. There's no other bunk open now."

He lifted the lid of a great sea-chest. It was two-thirds filled, but there was room enough for the boy's diminutive figure. He sprang hastily in, and the heavy cover was quickly lowered.

"Now, keep mum. I'll prop the lid a bit so you kin git breath. Don't make as much stir as

a mouse in a meal chest, or they mought suspicion you."

The next minute the men who had rushed on deck came swearing down the ladder into the dark fore-castle. Bob had extinguished the lamp which he had lit during his short conference with his captive.

"What's the row on deck?" he demanded. "Ain't shipped a sea, or let run a stray spar, hey?"

"It's that infernal fetch, ag'in," growled one of the men. "The thing appeared to Joe Black in his trick at the helm. The fool let all fly, and run for'ard skeered blue. Hang his ugly picture. I'd like to give him a salt water bath fu'st, and the ghost one arter. I don't take stock in no ghosts, and the chap as flies the wheel for sich a skeer ought to— Oh Lord, what's that?"

He had seated himself on Bob's sea-chest, and sprung up suddenly, as if something had stung him. In reality, he had displaced the prop by which Bob had fastened up the lid, and it was its sudden fall, and Dick's groan as he felt himself squeezed by the heavy weight, that frightened the bragging sailor.

"A brave chap you are," cried Bob, with ready self-possession. "Skeered at the squealin' of a rusty hinge. Come, lads, let's to bunk ag'in. We're robbed of half our snoozin' spell. I'll see if Tim's bulky corporation has busted anything inside my chest."

He took advantage of the darkness to relift the cover of the chest, give a reassuring pat to his captive, and fix the fallen prop more securely. The edge stood open a half inch for the admission of air. Dick lay as silent as a mouse.

Within two minutes more all the sailors were swinging in their hammocks, and ere five minutes had past sleep ruled supreme in the fore-castle of the Wildwing. Even the boy, in his close quarters, was sinking into unconsciousness.

We must pass rapidly over the events of two days. Bob Backstay had taken the first safe opportunity to get the captive out of his close quarters, and to slip him, through a trap in the bulkhead, into a narrow lumber-room in the fore-front of the ship. Here he brought Dick a share of his meals, and admonished him to lie quiet until the vessel reached harbor.

"The captain's as mad as a West Injy hurricane," he declared to Dick. "He's fizzing like wet gunpowder, and he mought do you a harm if he overhauled you while this wind holds. Lay low. He had the hatches off this mornin' and the hold s'arched. You'd had some broken bones if he'd nabbed you."

"I'd give all I'm worth if I was safe ashore," faltered Dick.

"You would, eh? And 'bout how much are you wuth, little 'un?"

"I've got two gold guineas," said Dick, with an air of great importance. "It tuk me three months to save it up a sellin' papers, and I got it changed to English money, because they don't know enough to take American t'other side the water."

The old tar laughed grimly at the speech of the young millionaire.

"A sweet little grampus you are, to start out and see the world with 'bout cash enough to carry you from Liverpool to Lunnun. Best stick to the ship and let me make a sailor of ye."

"Guess if you'd been bunkin' for two weeks atop a pile o' bags, in a dark hole, a-fightin' rats for fun, you mought have enough of the ship for one dose. What's more, I've got a reason why I want to git to England."

"Never see'd a boy yet that hadn't a reason for everything," answered Bob. "What is it? Do you want to take a blink at Liverpool streets and try your tongue on the cockneys?"

"Not much," rejoined Dick, promptly. "I've got a uncle 'cross the water somewhere as I want to see. It's my mother's brother, and he lives in the city of Chester, that I'm told ain't fur out from Liverpool. He's got the spongs, and I kalkerlate to make him pony down handsome."

"Got the what?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"The spondulicks. The money-bags. He's bu'stin' rich. And he ain't got nary wife nor child. I'm his nearest relation. And I'm a goin' fur the old man heavy."

The old tar looked askance at his *protege*, while a low whistle came from his lips.

"A rich uncle, hey? See here, Dick, take an old salt's advice and keep clear of him. Jist drop him a bit of a letter to let him know you're ready to be on hand when they come to read his will."

"What'll I do that fur?" asked the surprised boy.

"'Cause your style ain't the sort to please an English gentleman, that's all. Your ways may be prime among boot-blacks, but you wouldn't be two days in your uncle's house afore he'd kick you into the gutter and cut you off in his will. Just keep clear of him, my lad. Go back to York in the Wildwing, and pick up some notion of a sailor's ways. And I'll help you write a letter to the old uncle as'll let him know that he's got a live nevey."

This was undoubtedly good advice, but Dick had long ago made up his mind, and was not to be turned aside at a word. He had no notion of giving up his traveling projects until he had at least made a fair trial of them.

"I don't care a picayune fur the spondulicks," he boldly asserted. "If he plays bluff on me I'm going to open his eyes, you bet. He didn't treat my mother none too well. I'd jist as lieve as not tell him to take his money to buy grave-stones fur dead monkeys. Guess Dusty Dick kin make his way, if there weren't sich a thing as a mule."

"Don't be a fool, boy. Don't fling away a fortune just to give your slippery tongue an airing. What's your uncle's name?"

"Mr. William Pearson."

"And where does he live?"

"In Chester."

"But Chester's a big place."

"And he's a big gun. Guess you kin easy find a big gun in a big place."

The old boatswain laughed. Dick was certainly sharp enough.

"Best take my advice," he repeated, "and l'arn seamanship and manners aboard this good

ship. Meanwhfle I'll see your uncle, and tell him as he's got a nevey alive in Ameriky."

"Land ho!" The shout came faintly to the boy's ears, from far up above the deck, but it sung in his young soul like a call to battle. Oh! if he only dared go on deck, and feast his eyes with a sight of the coming shore!

"Are we coming to land?" he eagerly demanded. "Will we be in harbor soon?"

"Not for a good two days yet, my boy. I reckon it's Fastnet light that's sighted, outside o' Queenstown. We've got a long run up the channel afore we see Liverpool."

He left the boy in his retreat, and made his way to the deck, where all the crew were eagerly observing the low shore line, whose fresh green hue told of the verdant fields of Ireland.

Two days and nights more passed away. They were now running up St. George's Channel, before a fresh breeze, and in a chopping sea which gave the poor boy the first touch of seasickness he had yet felt.

He was about ready, in his misery, to wish the ship would go to the bottom with all on board, when Bob Backstay came again below.

"Hold your level, my poor fellow," he said, kindly. "We'll be in harbor before noon. Holyhead light is just lifted, and we'll round Anglesey Island afore sunrise. Then there's a straight wake for the Liverpool docks and old England's shores."

Sick as he was, the boy roused himself at this news. The sight of land to a seasick passenger is like the walls of Paradise; and Dick, after his rough experience, yearned for it as one might yearn for heaven.

It was to him like the full cup to the drunkard. Whatever the danger, he must see it again if he died for it. He crept out of his contracted quarters. The forecabin seemed empty, and he made his way slowly and painfully up the ladder.

The nightly gloom yet lay on the deck, though there was a faint gleam of light in the eastern sky. Dick crept unseen across to the bulwarks, where, screened behind a coil of rope, he looked eagerly eastward across the glooming waves. There, in the far distance, loomed a dim light, disappearing and reappearing at measured intervals. He knew it was the lighthouse glow, that told of land upon their lee. With heartfelt satisfaction, he sunk to the deck, too sick to retreat.

The morning sun more and more illumined the sky. In the far east a somewhat darker line than the rest of the sky could be discerned. Dick's eyes saw it, but he did not know that that cloud-like line was the distant shore-line for which his heart yearned.

Only now he felt the danger of his situation, and looked around him to gauge the chances of escape. What was his horror to see looking down on him in stern surprise the harsh countenance of Captain Hastings?

"Nailed, by all that's good!" ejaculated the latter. "So this is our ghost? Hang me if I didn't know it! Come, young hopeful, you've had your fling. It's my turn now."

He gripped Dick's arm with an angry clutch.

CHAPTER III.

THE STOWAWAY COURT-MARTIALED.

IN the cabin of the good ship Wildwing, by the light of the early morning sun, a sort of court-martial was in session. It consisted of Captain Hastings, Mr. Blake, his first officer; Mr. Jenkins, his second; and Bob Backstay, the shrewd old foretopman, who had claimed the right to look after his *protege*. In their midst crouched the miserable little culprit, looking like a fox that has been caught in the very act of robbing a hen-roost.

He presented, indeed, a sorry aspect. His diminutive figure was half covered with rags, which were none the better for his rat-like creepings through the ship's hold. His face was spotted with tar and grime, until it was impossible to discover its native complexion. He sat doubled up on the chair where they had placed him, with his bare feet on the rounds, his chin nearly on his knees, and his eyes glancing round with the sharp eagerness of a cornered rat.

And yet any keen observer could have seen that there was more in the lad than at first sight appeared. His features were regular, his eyes bright and intelligent, his tangled hair half hid a broad, high forehead. There was a certain alertness in his looks as of one that is fully wide awake to every contingency. His figure, though small, was well knit and gracefully formed. It had the shapeliness of the fawn, and looked as if it might have the activity of the deer. His age it was not easy to make out. To look at his general appearance, one would have said sixteen. To look at the worldly wisdom of his face, twenty-five might have seemed a safer guess.

The captain's harsh features grew harder as he cast his stern eyes on the youthful culprit.

"So, young one," he roared, in a tone like the growl of a hurricane, "you're trying to steal a free passage aboard this good ship, hey? Confound your dirty little picture, do you know what we generally do with stowaways?"

"Sew 'em up in canvas bags and chuck 'em overboard, I s'pose," answered the boy, with perfect seriousness.

A smile came to every face but that of the captain. Dick's tone was so grave, his look so earnest, that it seemed as if he really expected such a fate.

"Just so; and with a ten-pound shot at their feet, so that they won't waste any time in sinking," answered the captain, quite as seriously. "Mr. Jenkins, pass the word for'ard to get up a bag and a shot. And pipe all hands up for execution."

A queer look came upon Dick's face as the officer quietly sought the deck.

"By the way, Mr. Jenkins," continued the captain, "look abaft and see if there is a shark following. They're generally about to snap up stray bits like this one."

The boy's eyes were fixed upon the captain's face as he gave these orders with seeming seriousness.

"Wish ye'd look fur a whale instead," gravely demanded the culprit, "'cause then a feller mought have old Jonah's luck, and be h'isted

up ashore arter a three days' voyage. If I's got to go overboard I'd like to take all the chances."

This speech brought a grim smile to the captain's stern face. He sat for a few moments in silence, looking into the boy's apparently innocent countenance. At the end of that time Mr. Jenkins returned and quietly resumed his seat.

"I've passed up your orders," he remarked. "And there's a big shark just off the weather-beam."

"Very well. We'll soon give the young one a chance to play ghost in earnest. But I want to ask him a few questions first. How came you aboard this ship, sirrah?"

"Snaked aboard," answered Dick. "Afore she flung off her tie ropes."

"And what the blazes did you want aboard? Where are you bound? Wasn't America wide enough to hold you?"

"Got sorter tired o' starvin' round New York," answered Dick. "Grub was gettin' mighty thin, and jobs as skeerce as bullfrogs at Christmas. Took a notion I'd like to see the world, and try and pick up a livin' t'other side the duck pond. That's why I shipped aboard this here vessel."

A laugh passed around the board at this naive explanation.

"A jolly little mariner this," exclaimed Mr. Jenkins. "How have you lived since you came on board?"

"Mostly on wheat and cheese," answered Dick, gravely. "Gnawed a hole in a wheat sack, and found a cheese box with the cover bu'sted. It weren't very high old grub, a-chawin' raw wheat and moldy cheese."

The culprit looked pleadingly around the circle of his judges, his eyes resting hopefully on old Bob's weather-beaten countenance.

"Bless my top-lights but the lad must ha' been half-starved," muttered the old tar. "I tuk pity on the little rat and guv him some grub the last day or two, but the sea gripes ain't left him much appetite. Mebbe it wasn't seamanlike to hide him, but a fox 'd have let up on a chicken as begged like the young chap did."

"You had best have let me settled that," harshly rejoined the captain. "If the youngster was so well fed what brought him on deck at night, to scare the men out of their wits?"

"Couldn't hang out without water," rejoined the lad. "And a feller couldn't help gittin' tired of chawin' wheat and cheese."

The captain's grim face lost some of its harsh expression.

"Come," he said. "Let's know a little more about you. What's your name?"

"Dusty Dick is what the Bowery boys used to call me. But my right name's Dick Dareall. 'Tain't of'n a feller gits his right name 'mongst New York boys."

"And so you've run away from your father and mother to see the world?"

"Reckon not. I ain't that sort. My mother's dead, and I ain't see'd my father fur a good ten year. He was a sailor, as set out on a voyage fur Afrikay, and never come back ag'in. I's jist had to scratch fur a livin', and I got sort o' tired o' scratchin'. Ain't much show fur a

poor orphan, as has got all the world to root ag'in'."

Old Bob Backstay looked earnestly at the boy as he thus told his story, while a gleam of recollection marked his wrinkled face.

"What did they call the craft as your daddy crossed the salt waters in?" he eagerly asked.

"Don't jist remember."

"Wasn't it the Sumter?"

"You bet! That's it fur a pigeon."

"Come here, boy," cried the old salt. "Your daddy was my shipmate. And as prime a topsman as ever drew rope or handled a reef point. Why, cap'n, Dave Dareall was wuth your whole crew in a hurricane. And this boy looks like a chip of the old block." He caught the boy's hands and drew him from his chair, while his eyes shrewdly surveyed him. "Trim lines, a good cutwater, a rakish set 'o' spars—shiver my timbers if the boy ain't got the making of a man in him! Won't never do to fling a neat bit of flesh and blood like this to the sharks, while there's so many lubbers afloat."

"Just haul in your slack and be hanged to you!" roared the captain. "You've got too free a tongue, Bob Backstay. You've been whimpering around this boy like a dashed soft-hearted fool that never smelt sea salt. Shoot me if I'd hold back long from tracing up the pair of you and giving you a round dozen apiece. I've always looked on you as a chap that knew a sailor's duty."

A chivalrous feeling of devotion came into Dick's young heart. Sick as he was, he stood upright before the old tar and extended his arms in a protecting attitude.

"Guv me the two dozen, cap'n," he pleaded. "I jist made him hide me. Guv me three dozen and let up on him. I'd sooner be chucked overboard at once than have any harm come to old Bob Backstay fur helpin' a poor boy in trouble."

There was some admiration in the laugh that passed around the table. Even the captain's face softened.

"The little villain has grit, that's sure," he remarked. "There's solid oak in him. I wouldn't have thought there was so much back-bone in such a little lump of rags and dirt."

"Don't git skeered, Dick," whispered the old tar. "The cap'n's like a roller, all bluster on top and smooth water at bottom. Lord love ye, he knows Bob Backstay too well to lay a rough hand on him."

"What do you say, gentlemen?" asked the captain, with affected gruffness. "Shall we pitch the stowaway overboard and be done with him?"

"There's some moldy pork in the meat-chest that'll make better shark bait," answered Mr. Jenkins.

"Shall we trice him up in the rigging then, and give him a dose of rope's end?"

"The little rat is half gone now, with sea-sickness," rejoined Mr. Blake.

"I see. He's won you all over with his baby face," growled the captain, though he could not keep back a smile from his face. "Take him away, Bob. Wash his face, and let us see what there is in the way of eyes and nose behind all that dirt. And see if you can find him some-

thing in the way of clothes. There's a boy's toggery somewhere in the ship."

"Thank you, cap'n," said Dick, walking forward in a manly manner, and taking the captain's hard hand in both his. "You're a-givin' me a good deal more nor I deserve."

"I don't want a scarecrow aboard my ship for a whole voyage," answered the captain, as he rudely withdrew his hand. "As long as you're to sail back to New York aboard this craft I calculate to have you a little ship-shape."

"Sail back to New York?" faltered Dick.

"Just so. No man nor boy ever stole a passage from John Hastings yet, and hang me if any one ever shall. Back to New York you go, for a nabbed stowaway, and what's more you've got to work your passage. I'll teach you a few points in seamanship.—There, Bob, take him away, and scrub the tar from his face. I've said my say."

Dick was very much down in the visage as he followed his old sailor friend. After all his efforts he was doomed to disappointment. His cherished desire to see the world was to be nipped in the bud. The vessel was now in smoother waters, and the lad's sea sickness was nearly gone. But he was sick at heart with the weight of a lost opportunity.

The feeling of sickness had so depressed him during his examination that he would have cared little if they had really decided to make him food for sharks. But as he began to feel better in his stomach a new lease of life came to him. Dick was becoming his old risky, impudent, and venturesome self again.

"Does the cap'n mean it?" he asked of his conductor.

"Every word of it," answered Bob.

"Then I ain't goin' back, nary time. I'm goin' ashore, and ropes won't hold me."

"You'd best go back, my little chap. You'll l'arn somethin' of seamanship. And if ye're spry the cap'n'll likely guv ye a lift back to old England ag'in."

This was a new phase of the question. Dick ran it over in his mind as he strove to wash the grime from his face. His father had been a prime sailor; why should not he be? And a sailor's life was full of the adventure for which his soul thirsted.

"I'm bound to see my uncle, anyhow," he asserted.

"Better not," answered the sailor.

"I'll take the chances," rejoined Dick. "And if Cap Hastings tries to hold me I'll git out o' this here ship, if I have to gnaw out through the side timbers. I ain't goin' to be nobody's prisoner, you bet."

When Dick came on deck again he was so changed in appearance as to be hardly recognizable. His face was so clean that it shone, and old Bob had found him a moderately well-fitting suit of boy's clothes.

The word had passed among the sailors that it was this boy that had so long played ghost on the Wildwing, and they looked on him with eager curiosity. They saw a well-grown boy, with brown complexion and bright eyes, and with something very keen and alert in his expression. In form he was shapely and graceful,

and gave evidence of more agility and muscular power than was usual for one of his age. Every soul of them were taken with his appearance except Joe Black the helmsman, who felt revengeful toward him for the scare and the kicking he had got.

Hour after hour passed away, as the ship ran along to the eastward before a favoring breeze. To the south lay a distant land line that held the boy's eyes with a sort of fascination. It was the first earnest of the new world for which he had so longed.

"Why don't we make fur the shore?" he asked of a sailor.

"That's Anglesey Island. Liverpool's off here to the east'ard. We'll forge into the Mersey afore sundown."

He was right. Late in the afternoon a long line of coast loomed up to the east. It grew rapidly more distinct as the ship dashed onward, while a cloud of sails seemed converging in the same direction. One or two great steamers also plowed the waters toward that welcome coast. Ere long a dim line of distant spires rose like fairy minarets against the sky. Then the more slender lines of crowded shipping became visible, like a network of spars. A wide opening appeared in the coast, to which all the vessels converged. It was the mouth of the Mersey. Within an hour the good ship Wildwing rode on the waters of that world-famous river, with a dense mass of shipping before her, and the mighty docks, and far-stretching roofs and spires, of Liverpool outlined against the eastern sky.

Dick fairly danced with excitement.

"I'm a-goin' to take that there town in, you kin bet yer bottom dime on that!" he ejaculated. "I'm bound to go ashore in Liverpool, spite o' the cap'n."

"You are, eh?" cried a harsh voice at his elbow. "We'll see about that. You've had a good glint at old England?"

"Yes, sir," faltered poor Dick.

"Make much of it then, for it's your last. Here, Joe Black, take this sprout below, and lock him up. If he gets out to daylight before we leave harbor, I shall hold you responsible."

"Ay! ay!" bluntly answered the sailor. "I'll take keer he don't catch an English fever. Come along, young'un."

There was something of revengeful spite in the roughness with which he dragged the boy away, thrust him into a contracted hole below deck, and turned a key upon him.

"Guess you'll stay there till you're wanted," he harshly remarked. "You won't find it so easy to play ghosts while I've got charge of you!"

Dick flung himself down in despair. This was a disastrous ending to his ardent hopes.

CHAPTER IV.

DICK TREADS ON FOREIGN SHORES.

ANOTHER morning dawned upon the busy scene within which the Wildwing had dropped anchor the previous night! The rays of a bright sun fell upon a forest of masts, which crowded the broad stream and the vast docks of Liverpool. Huge warehouses rose in long lines

on the water-streets and even upon the broad and massive stone embankment of the docks. The noise of busy traffic filled the air, the sound of wheels, the puff of lifting engines, the roar of a thousand voices. Hundreds of boats were plying back and forth on the stream. Men attired in every costume and speaking every language of the civilized world appeared upon decks and wharves. The noise of lading and unlading, and the uproar of the busiest commercial city on the globe, filled the sunny morning air.

Something of this came to poor Dick in his close and hot prison, and aroused an intense desire to escape, and a feeling of revengeful anger against the captain for robbing from him the world of hope shut out by a few inches of sturdy oak plank.

"I blowed last night I'd eat my way out through the ship's sides," he muttered, "but somehow I don't feel hungry that way this morning. The job's a bit too big fur my appetite. Anyhow I'm not goin' to hang round here, you bet."

He felt in his pockets to see if he had removed all his possessions in changing his rags for his new suit.

In doing so he came across the key by which he had previously gained access from the hold to the cabin. A gush of hope came into his heart.

"Wonder if the locks is all the same?" he queried. "If they is I'm goin' to dust it out of this here ship quicker'n shootin'. I'd been starved into a funeral specimen afore now if this key hadn't fit t'other door. I'll giv the next brick house I git holt of if it only works in this lock."

But Dick was not destined to lose a brick house. The key didn't work. The lock refused to open, and he dashed the useless key angrily away, and flung himself down upon the deck in spiteful rage.

"Jist my luck!" he ejaculated. "If I hadn't wanted so bad to git out you'd seen that old door pile open the minute the key touched it. Queer how nice things work when nobody wants 'em to, and how contrary they git the minute a feller wants 'em to work smooth."

He kicked the door, spitefully in boyish spleen.

"What's the row in there?" cried a harsh voice from the outside. "Keep quiet, you dirty rat, or I'll dust yer jacket for ye. I ain't forgot that you got me a kicking."

The door opened as he spoke, and the harsh face of Joe Black appeared, with a look of malicious spite.

"Don't you kick up no didoes here," he exclaimed. "The cap'n told me I was to boss this here job, and if you start any shindy I'll take a bit of the starch out of ye."

"Jist you tech me!" cried Dick, defiantly. "I've got old Bob Backstay on my side, and I bet he'll salt you."

The burly brute lifted his foot with intent to kick the defiant lad. But he thought better of it. Perhaps the threat of Bob Backstay checked him.

"Don't try yer slack on me," he growled. "I ain't got no angel's temper to swaller a boy's imperdence. Yere's yer mornin' grub, and if

you kick up any shindigs shoot me if I don't starve you fur a day or two to teach you manners."

He stepped over Dick, who lay on the floor close by the partly-open portal, and stooped to place on the deck the tin dish of food which he bore. There came a quick, shuffling sound behind him, the sound of a slammed door, the click of a sharply-turned key. A laugh of triumphant malice greeted him as he hastily turned.

Dick had disappeared. The door was closed and locked. The laugh came from its opposite side.

"Guess mebbe you'll like that grub yerself," cried the boy. "'Cause likely you'll have to do without fur a day or two to teach you manners. I'm goin' ashore, but mebbe the cap'n mought miss you afore the ship's quite unloaded."

The caged jailer replied by a volley of kicks upon the locked door, while he threatened Dick with dire revenge if he were not released. But only an irritating laugh followed, and a parting bit of advice from the triumphant boy.

"Jist you keep still. I'll telegraph to the cap'n arter I git to Lunnun as there's a plucked pigeon locked up in the rubbish hole. Good-by, an' keep a weather eye open for ghosts. They're thick as bumbly bees round this here ship."

His exasperating laugh died away in the distance, and the involuntary prisoner was left to his meditations.

An hour afterward, while all the crew were busy on the forward deck, a light splash was heard in the water aft.

"What's that?" asked the first mate. "Look over the rail, Jack, and see if anything has dropped overboard."

The sailor spoken to reported that nothing was visible, and work went on without further attention to the incident. The look-out had failed to observe a small, round mass clinging close under the ship's quarter, and no one saw this mass gradually leave the ship's side, with a swimming motion. It was the head of Dick Dareall, who had made his way stealthily to the deck, and taken the opportunity to drop unobserved into the still waters of the stream. He was now lustily striking out for the docks, in a direction to avoid observation from the ship's crew.

Ten minutes afterward there was another incident on board the Wildwing. A man came rushing hastily on deck, with disheveled hair, starting eyes, and a face suffused with rage until it seemed almost crimson. It was Joe Black, who had managed to break out of his prison, and who was half beside himself with fury.

"Where's that boy?" he shouted. "The little lubber played it on me, and locked me up in limbo. Where is he, till I shake the lights out o' his dirty carcass?"

"You've let him slip, have you?" cried Captain Hastings, in sudden anger. "I'll deal with you, blast you, if he ain't found. Search the ship for the rat."

Mr. Blake remembered the splashing sound he had lately heard. He sprung to the side and looked across the stream, just in time to catch sight of a diminutive figure crawling on the stone inclosure of the docks.

"Stole away!" he exclaimed. "There he goes! The sharp youngster has given us all the slip."

"Where?" demanded the captain, springing forward, just in time to see Dick raise himself erect on the edge of the embankment, and swing his hat in triumph as he turned his face toward the ship.

The next minute he disappeared behind a building which occupied that part of the causeway.

"Launch a boat, and make after him!" yelled the angry commander. "By good and bad I'll have him back, or know the reason why!"

But he didn't have him back. Dick had shot away like a deer, and had managed to make his way from the stone causeway into the city long ere the boat could intercept him. Once in the city streets he was safe from pursuit, and he made it his first duty to hunt a sunny spot where he could dry his dripping clothes in the warm rays of the midsummer sun. He had set foot at last on foreign shores.

A few hours afterward the figure of Dick Dareall might have been seen traversing the crowded streets of the great commercial city of Liverpool, thoroughly dried, in the best of spirits, and with an extra dose of American assurance in the independent manner in which he carried himself. He had made up his mind to uphold the pride of a full-born American citizen wherever in the world he came.

There was a double-distilled Yankee swagger in the boy, as he walked along the streets of the English city, and looked up at its massive buildings with a supercilious air. No New York street boy ever bore himself with more independent assurance, and one might have thought that he owned a brace of American cities, and did not think Liverpool worth the buying.

Boys are boys all the world over. Liverpool was not without its gamin fraternity, and some sharp slack passed between Dick and some of these boys, who were attracted by his foreign air and manner. But Dick had been brought up in a wide-awake school, and was not the boy to be talked down by any half-trained foreign sprout. One of them, who showed a disposition to come to closer terms, he toppled over into the gutter.

"I'm a Yankee, I am!" exclaimed Dick, setting his hat rakishly on one side of his head, and swaggering on more independently than ever. "I've got the American eagle in my coat pocket, and the stars and stripes under my belt. The chap as treads on me treads on the American flag, and down goes his house if he's as big as an elephant. I've got Uncle Sam's honor to hold up, and I'm goin' to do it like a hoss."

His wanderings in time brought him to a railroad station, a fine stone edifice which he looked at with a critical air.

"'Tain't bad, considerin'," he remarked, with an approving nod of his head. "Some of these Englishers has been across the waters, and learned a p'int or two 'bout buildin'. Where does this here railroad run to?" he asked a bystander.

"To London."

"It's Chester I'm consigned for. Goin' there

to see my uncle. How's a chap goin' to absquatulate to that there place, mister?"

The man looked at Dick with a smile of amusement.

"This road will take you there," he answered. "Sixteen miles out."

"Thankee!" answered Dick politely. "Ain't quite picked up the ropes round these diggin's yit."

He made the best of his way into the station. It was near train time, and purchased a ticket, and then set himself to watch the ways of English railroad management, with an air of conscious superiority.

"Lawsee, why don't they cross the duck pond, and pick up some ideas in Ameriky?" he observed. "Never see'd nothin' so awkward in all my born days."

There was a rush of people for the train, which would be off in a couple of minutes more. Dick was carried along in the rush, and thrust by the guard through a door in the side of a car into a narrow section containing only a couple of seats. These were already partly occupied by three previous passengers.

"Hold yer level there, neighbor," cried Dick in surprise. "I ain't calkerlatin' to travel in a spittoon or a snuff-box. I paid fur my ticket, and I want a seat in a car that's got elbow room fur a grasshopper. Like to know what sort of a galoot you take me fur."

"What ails you?" cried the guard sharply. "This is the best car on the train."

"This is, hey?" answered Dick, surveying the car with a sniff of contempt. "Ye only oughter see an American palace car, then. Ye'd open them aves of yourn so wide that it'd take a jackscrew to fotch 'em together ag'in."

Dick stepped into the car with an indescribable air of compassion on the ignorance of foreigners. The guard angrily slammed the door behind him, and locked it.

"Hey there!" cried Dick, starting up in alarm. "What you lockin' that door fur? This ain't no cattle car, nor ye ain't express baggage. S'pose this train rattles down a precipice, or bu'sts its nose ag'in' another engine. What's to become—"

His protest was checked by the sudden starting of the train, which flung him back breathless into his seat. The other occupants of the car were two young ladies, who were laughing with much amusement at Dick's fright, and a middle-aged gentleman, a genuine Englishman, staid, upright, full-faced, kindly, yet somewhat supercilious, who looked at Dick with an air of chilly disapproval.

"So you are an American boy?" he asked.

"You bet I am," answered Dick, sturdily. "Right from the shoulder. Full-blooded. Dyed in the wool. Reg'lar hickory-grain Yankee."

"I thought so," answered the gentleman, adjusting his eyeglasses for a closer look at this unique specimen. "You may learn a few things before you get back again. On this side the water we don't tumble our trains over precipices, or have engines run their noses together. So there is no harm in being locked in."

"Just as I 'spected," returned Dick, with im-

pudent assurance. "Allers heered you didn't know what travelin' is this side the ocean. A feller ain't begun to see life till he's been bu'sted up on a railroad train; and a true-blooded Yankee'd be ashamed to come home from a railroad trip without two or three broken ribs. You folks dunno what travelin' is."

The gentleman was silent. The young ladies quietly tittered. Dick's heart swelled with pride. He felt that he had triumphantly upheld the honor of his country against all takers.

CHAPTER V.

DICK CALLS ON HIS UNCLE.

THE train thundered into the Chester station. Dick had managed to display a good deal of his mettle on the journey. The English gentleman, secretly interested in this genuine specimen of the independent American street Arab, had taken occasion to draw him out, and had got a pretty strong notion of what Dick thought about foreigners in general, and English in particular. The fact was that the perverse youth had taken a dislike to the stiff manner, the slow, set speech, and the general stateliness of his new acquaintance, and had spread himself a little freely in consequence.

"There!" he ejaculated, as he stepped hastily from the car. "Glad I'm out o' that pill-box. The idear o' folks travelin' where they've got to take a reef in their nose for fear it'll bump ag'in' t'other side of the car. Guess I'll go hunt up my uncle."

"Your uncle?" repeated the gentleman.

"Yes. That's what brung me here. Wouldn't catch me in these diggin's only I'm streakin' out for a rich uncle. He's got plenty of the spondulicks, and I ain't got none. Calkulate to bleed him a few."

"What is his name?" asked the gentleman, while the young ladies stood listening with great interest.

"Mr. William Pierson. Mebbe you don't know him?"

"Maybe I don't," answered the gentleman, while a peculiarly sour look crossed his face. He turned hastily away and was quickly lost in the crowd of passengers.

Dick turned to the two young ladies, who were surveying him with a very odd expression, and seemed to have much ado to prevent themselves from laughing in his face. Something in the conversation had caused them great amusement.

"Scuse me, ladies," he remarked politely. "Couldn't none o' you tell me where to find my uncle? I'm a poor orphan, that's come 'cross the Atlantic ocean to find him."

"You had better have stayed on the other side," answered one of the ladies. "I'm sadly afraid you will go back empty-handed."

"Mr. Pearson is a captain in the Eighth Infantry, which is under orders for Egypt," remarked the other. "He may have sailed. You wouldn't like to follow him there?"

"Wouldn't I?" answered Dick. "I've sot out to see the world, and guess I mought as well take in Egypt."

"It takes money to travel," returned one of

the ladies. "Are you supplied with that necessary item?"

"Takes money or cheek," rejoined Dick. "I've been brung up in New York, where boys gits plenty of cheek. And I calkulate to make my uncle pan out too, if I kin only settle down on him. Dunno where he lives, then?"

"Number 220 Northgate street," answered the young lady, checking an inclination to laugh.

"Thankee," returned Dick, taking off his hat with great politeness for him. "Guess I'll drop down and interview him."

He walked off with something of a swagger, and with the notion that he had been very manly and gentlemanly, and had left behind him a favorable record of American manners. If he had looked behind him he would have seen the ladies laughing and talking with great amusement. But Dick was not much given to looking behind. In his motto the world lay ahead, and he was bound not to travel in the rear-guard.

As the self-possessed boy made his way through the streets of the English city he could not help being impressed with the strangeness of the scene that surrounded him. He had been dropped down in the heart of a world a thousand years old. Of all the cities of England, Chester is the one that has retained the most of its antique aspect, and its ancient walls are still preserved to keep out the destructive spirit of the nineteenth century.

Entering the city through its gates, as one might enter a city of the Middle Ages, the traveler finds himself in the midst of a marvelously old fashioned scene. The houses all seem of the style of a thousand years ago, while the peculiar arrangement known as "the Rows" seems to tell of very old times. The first floor of the houses has its front part open to the streets, and forms a covered gallery, along which a person can walk through nearly the whole town entirely under cover. This old footway is reached by stairs from the street. The stores lie back of the gallery, and shopping can be done without any exposure to foul weather.

Such was the strange scene that met Dick's eyes as he walked curiously onward, taking in new impressions at every step. He had fairly got away from the busy modern life of America.

Yet as he went on, certain modern indications met his eyes. Many soldiers were visible in the streets, and occasionally a squad, with bright new muskets and flashing bayonets, marched briskly past, with an air as if they meant business.

"What's up?" asked Dick of a lounging citizen. "The folks round here ain't all sojers, I guess."

"It is the Eighth Infantry Regiment," was the answer. "They've got marching orders for Egypt. They'll be off for Plymouth to night."

"The Eighth?" cried Dick. "That's the one that my uncle's a captain in. Guess I better go fur him lively."

He had no difficulty in finding his uncle's residence. He had already learned the street and number, and made no hesitation about asking his way. There was many a dubious look at the odd boy as he proceeded. The good folks

thereaway were not used to that sort of young gentlemen. There was too much of the flavor of the wide West about Dick for their tastes.

The house to which he had been directed proved to be a spacious stone mansion, very showy, and surrounded by broad open grounds. It lay outside the city wall, in the fashionable suburb of the town. An old-fashioned brass knocker graced the broad oak door.

Dick looked around him for a bell-pull; but not seeing any, he made the knocker sound with a noise loud enough to rouse up the whole neighborhood.

"Jist like furrenirs," he remarked, with a contemptuous air. "Dunno what a door-bell is, I reckon. Wonder they don't set up a loaded cannon at the door, fer a chap to fire off when he wants to git in."

The door quickly opened, and revealed a highly-starched servant, with his chin in the air.

"Mr. Pearson live here?" asked Dick, with business briskness.

"'E does," was the answer. "Mr. Villiam Pierson resides 'ere."

"That's right, old stiff. Show me in. Tell him it's his nevey from America."

The servant drew back with an air of consternation as his eyes fell on Dick's ill fitting and queer cut attire, and as he heard his peremptory voice.

"His nevey from Hameriky!" he repeated, with uplifted hands.

"Jist so. Reckon that's plain English," answered Dick, with a lordly assurance.

The servant hesitated for a moment; but Dick's air and attitude meant business. If the boy had been a nabob he could not have displayed more independent dignity.

"Who is there?" asked a sharp voice from the hall.

"Hit's a boy, who says as—"

"Dry up, old-trip-and-go-fetch-it," cried Dick, his active spirit exasperated by the drawling slowness of the servant. "It's me, sir. Mr. Dick Dareall from America—Mr. Pearson's nevey. Crossed the big pond to see my English uncle."

He pushed into the hall as he spoke. There stood an erect, neatly-dressed, good-looking gentleman, with a shadow of a smile on his face.

"Come in here," he remarked, leading into a side room.

Dick followed, and paused in amazement at the magnificence of the scene around him. The apartment was very richly furnished in green and gold, and glittered until it dazzled his eyes. He had never dreamed of such grandeur, and for a moment fancied that he must have stumbled into a palace by mistake.

"You are Mr. Pearson's nephew, you say?" asked the gentleman, with a smile of amusement at Dick's wonder.

"Yes," answered the boy, with less assurance. He dropped into a chair, and continued to stare at the fairly-like vision, as it seemed to him.

"Mr. Pearson has only one nephew in the world. What proof have you that you are he?"

The tone was somewhat haughty and overbearing. Dick looked quickly at the speaker, on whose face was an air of doubt and disdain.

In an instant the boy was himself again. He had vowed to sustain the honor of America wherever he went, and was not going to be put down by any aristocrat if he lost a fortune by his independence.

"Are you Mr. Pearson?" he asked, with an air as haughty as that of his questioner.

"No. But I represent him."

"I've got my papers," replied Dick, "and I guess I'll keep 'em. Mr. Pearson kin see 'em, but I ain't goin' to shell out to everybody that axes for 'em."

"What brings you here?" was the next question. "Why did you not stay in America?"

"'Cause I got wild fur a tramp," answered Dick. "My daddy's lost in Afriky, and my mother's dead. She told me as how my uncle in England had a pile of gold as big as a meet-in'-house, and as he'd never done nothin' fur her, mebber he mought pan out a little fur me. That's what's brung me 'cross the Atlantic ocean."

"You had better have stayed at home," was the reply. "In the first place, Mr. Pearson is not the manto accept every Yankee boy tramp as his nephew. In the next place he has no money to waste on traveling beggars. In the third place he is under marching orders for Egypt, at the head of a gallant company. You will have to go there if you want to see him."

"I will," answered Dick, as assuredly as if he had only to cross the street to be in Egypt. "And you kin jist put this in yer pipe and smoke it, old hoss. The man as calls me a boy tramp is a gallinipper, and the man as calls me a travelin' beggar is a bu'sted sorehead, and I wouldn't guv a dime a gallon fer sich roosters. The world's got grub enough to feed me if I never see a shilling of Mr. Pearson's money. And it's big enough to hold me if I never set eyes on his countenance. There's your provender, and you'll hear the American bald eagle screech afore you see Dick Dareall back water. If I am only a boy I've been brought up where every man takes up as much room as a chestnut tree, and has got a heart like spring steel, and a hand like a forty-ton hammer."

Dick walked from the room with an air of lordly dignity. He had been touched to the quick by the insinuations of his questioner, and had grown eloquent through indignation. There was a man's heart in the boy's bosom as he strolled proudly from the house.

Hardly had he gone ere another gentleman emerged into the room from an alcove.

"Well?" he said, questioningly.

"It's an impudent little rogue, Mr. Pearson," was the reply. "But he does not look to me like a liar."

"He has too much Yankee assurance for my taste, at any rate," answered Mr. Pearson, with a shrug. "I fancy he will make his way through the world, without my help. After him, Harry, and give him this. It won't do to send him away quite empty-handed." He pressed a well-filled purse into the hand of the other. "And now I must haste. My minutes in England are numbered."

He quickly left the room.

Two hours afterward Dick was still wandering carelessly about the streets, when his at-

tention was attracted by the inspiring sounds of drum and fife, playing a quick marching air. Loud hurrahs arose from the spectators as the musicians rounded a corner into the street in which he was, followed at a quickstep by a company of well-armed and equipped soldiers. At their head marched their officers, with drawn swords and proud bearing.

"What soldiers are they?" asked Dick, as another loud cheer went up.

"It's a company of the gallant Eighth, off for the war in Egypt. Captain Pearson commanding. That's he. That brave soldier at the head."

Captain Pearson! Dick sprung hastily forward to catch a glimpse of his uncle. He might never have another chance. His eyes fell on the stately figure of the handsome officer, and he retreated as if he had been struck by a bullet.

"My cake's cooked," he muttered.

The man he saw was no other than his traveling companion of the morning, to whom he had bragged so profusely of the superior qualities of America!

"Bob Backstay has got a level head," continued Dick. "It's jist as he said. I ain't been two hours in this here town, and I'll bet a buffalo I'm cut off in my uncle's will already, as clean as they shave the bristles off a pig. No matter. I'm Dick Dareall, and I'm goin' through the world. There's as good fish in the sea yet as was ever hauled out of it."

An hour after he unexpectedly met the gentleman who had received him in Mr. Pearson's house.

"Here, my lad," cried the latter, with an air as if he was calling to a dog. "I told Mr. Pearson of your errand, and he believes, like me, that you are an impostor. But he sends you this to pay your way back to America with." He held out the purse he had received for Dick.

"He does, hey?" answered Dick, indignantly. "He don't send it to his nevey, but to git rid of a little lyin' beggar, hey?"

"That's about it," was the reply.

"Then jist take it back to him, and tell him that I'd see his money at the bottom of the sea afore I'd pocket a cent of it that didn't come to me as a right. I ain't no beggar, mister, and don't calculate to set up that line of bizness."

Dick walked on proudly, leaving the other behind, with a covert smile about his lips.

"The little idiot!" he said. "I knew he wouldn't touch it if I tried that plan, or he would never have had the offer. I fancy I can make better use of it. Let me see. I will go down and see the boys at the Green Dragon inn. There's always a jolly crew around there."

He walked away with a very satisfied air. He had done his duty by his employer, and felt that he had fairly earned the cash which Dick had refused.

A week passed away, during which Dick Dareall disappeared from sight. He was seeing England, wandering through its rural lanes, and taking in a full draught of that green beauty which makes it one of the most charming lands upon the earth.

Dick was not without his admiration for the

beautiful, and his life had been so spent in the streets that he enjoyed to the full the rich charm of the verdant English landscapes.

At the end of the week he reappeared in Liverpool, with an empty pocket, but a full memory. Nearly the first person he met on the city streets was old Bob Backstay.

"Hillo!" cried the latter. "Turned up again, hey?"

"Yes," answered Dick. "Out of uncles and out of money. Wish I'd tuk your advice and stuck on board, 'cause I've only been playin' the fool."

"Jist as I 'spected. Never see'd a boy yet as couldn't beat Jonah at doin' that. And what sheets have you got flyin' in the wind now?"

"Didn't git a show at my uncle. He's a sojer captain, and is off fur Egypt, where there's a war kicked up. Like to foller him, if I could only see my way clear."

"Then ye're in luck, my boy. The Wildwing isn't bound back to New York arter all. She's chartered to carry out troops to Egypt, and 'll sail inside o' two days. Streak aboard and make friends with Cap'n Hastings, and ye're in clover."

"Jolly for you!" cried Dick, flinging up his hat in delight. "Bet I'll circumnavigate on the cap'n. I'm arter my uncle like a 'skeeter arter a constable. Got him down on me heavy, but I'm bound to make him let up. He's got to pan out, or else somethin' 'll bu'st."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CRUISE OF THE WILDWING.

DICK DAREALL was still in the streets of Liverpool. He had consulted with Bob Backstay, and had devised a plan for getting again on board the Wildwing, but said plan was not yet in shape to put into execution. In one of his rounds of the busy streets he unexpectedly came across the gentleman whom he had met at his uncle's house. A sudden thought sprung into the boy's active mind.

"'Scuse me, sir," he said, plucking the gentleman's sleeve. "Reckon you ain't forgot me."

"Not quite," was the somewhat sour reply.

"I've changed my notion, that's all," continued Dick. "Guess I'll take that money purse. Bound fur Egypt, I am, and calkerlate to hand it back to my uncle and let him see I'm no beggar. S'pose you just fork over."

The gentleman hesitated for a minute, looking at Dick with a startled expression.

"Bound for Egypt?" he repeated.

"Exactly. Consigned to the seat o' war. So pony up that there purse."

A sharp look flashed into the gentleman's face.

"Here it is," he said, pressing something into Dick's hand.

"But where's the money?" cried Dick, as his eyes fell upon an empty purse.

"Leaked out," was the answer. "You wouldn't take it full. You must now be satisfied with it empty." He turned on his heel and walked away.

"I am well rid of that," he said to himself.

"Mr. Pearson is not the man to play tricks on. But if anything turns up now I can outlie the boy, and claim I gave him the full purse."

Dick stood looking oddly at the empty purse, while a shrewd whistle came slowly from his lips.

"That's what the boys call rich," he muttered. "He's eat the goose, and guvs me the empty skin. Don't I wish I were goin' to stay here. I'd like to trade that chap a Yankee boy's trick fer his English one. Ther's one bit left in it," he continued, feeling the purse. "Guess it kin stay there fur a nest egg."

He thrust the empty purse carelessly into his breast pocket, and strolled idly on, as if he did not care a fig how the world rolled.

Meanwhile all was busy enough on board the Wildwing. Her cargo had been rapidly discharged, and the space between decks hastily fitted up for the accommodation of the troops which Captain Hastings had engaged to convey to Egypt.

The war had suddenly broken out, Alexandria had been bombarded by the English and burned by the Arabs, and an army had to be sent out immediately. The government transports were not able to do all the work required, and many merchant ships had been chartered. The Wildwing was to take out a detachment of the Enniskillen Dragoons.

All was bustle upon the decks of the vessel. Boats were coming and going, lighters bringing stores and provisions, workmen fitting up bunks and state-rooms, a perfect medley of labor, at which the sailors looked on idly, with lighted pipes.

Amid all this confusion it was easy for a light active form to reach the deck unobserved from a boat alongside, and to slip unseen into the forecabin almost under the eyes of Captain Hastings. Evidently again there was somebody aboard the Wildwing whose name was not down on the ship's books.

A few day afterward the good ship hoisted anchor, set her sails to a favoring breeze, and glided gracefully down the broad channel of the stream, while her bulwarks were lined with red-coated soldiers, waving their caps in wild adieu to the shores of old England. Loud hurrahs rose as the vessel glided onward. The lads felt that they were off to do great deeds and gain great glory, while many a wet eye on shore showed a fear that they were off to be buried in solitary graves under far-off skies, where never an English breeze would blow upon their tombs. But there were few such gloomy thoughts on that bright day, and amid the loud cheers that rent the air.

In a few hours afterward they were well out in the channel, bowling merrily along before a fresh easterly breeze, with every sail set and the blue waters curling white under the ship's cutwater.

Captain Hastings stood on the forward deck, conversing with his first officer, as his eyes were fixed on the seas ahead.

"I wonder what has become of that sharp little stowaway?" he remarked. "The young bound gave me the slip in the neatest manner possible. I fully intended to carry him back to New York."

"Mebbe you'll have the chance 'yit, cap'n," came a youthful voice behind him.

The captain hastily turned, and an oath of

astonishment came from his lips as he saw before him the diminutive figure of Dick Dareall, with a look of indescribable self-assurance upon his face.

"By the seven lamps of Babylon, where did you come from?" he shouted.

"Didn't you order me to be kept in limbo till the ship left harbor?" asked Dick, with a roguish smile. "Don't want to lock me up clear 'cross the ocean, cap'n?"

"You lie, you rat!" cried the captain harshly. "You gave me the slip and made your way ashore."

"That's 'cause you put a galoot like Joe Black to look arter me," answered Dick, without flinching, though the angry commander had lifted his hand as if to strike him. "What's more, I had bizness ashore. But I'm here now, 'cordin' to orders, and ready to go where the ship goes, and to 'bey orders like a sailor."

The captain looked for a minute into the manly young face before him. Then his anger seemed to suddenly evaporate, and a laugh broke from his lips. Dick was not sea-sick now, as he had been in his former interview with the captain, and he was such a self-possessed young rascal that the latter found it impossible to continue angry with him.

"You confounded little gutter snipe," he exclaimed. "Shoot me if I won't find if there's any wool behind all that cry. If there's the making of a sailor in you I'll give you a show. If there is not I'll land you on the first shore I touch at. Up the main rigging with you, and lay out on the topmast yard. Let me see if your fingers and toes are as spry as your tongue."

Dick was off like a shot ere the words were hardly spoken. Springing into the main shrouds he ran up the ratlines like a monkey. He had been well used to climbing, and this was like child's play to him. In a minute's time he was well up in the rigging, and in a minute more was well out on the topmast yard. Soon the captain saw his slender form erect on the very extremity of the yard-arm, holding carelessly by a rope with his left hand, and swinging his cap gayly round his head with his right. At that sight he looked like a bird that had lighted on the spar.

"Back with you, you risky rascal!" yelled the captain in alarm. "I didn't bid you break your confounded young neck."

Dick drew back at this stern command. In a minute more he was seen descending to the deck, not by the orthodox route of the shrouds, but sliding down a stay-line as fearlessly as a trained old sailor.

"You'll do, my boy," remarked the captain, patting Dick on the head. "I'll make a sailor of you if you don't break your neck in the learning. Too much riskiness is worse than too little, mind that, my lad. Here, Bob, take the boy into your mess, and teach him a sailor's duty."

There was a proud color in Dick's cheek as he turned away in charge of old Bob Backstay.

We cannot follow the Wildwing step by step through the long journey that lay before her. Down the west coast of Wales, with its craggy coast line, and its distant mountains, she made

her way. Then past Land's End, and the Scilly Islands off Southwestern England. A few days more found her in the Bay of Biscay, where a fierce gale struck the ship, and threw two thirds of her soldier cargo into the pangs of seasickness. Out of this storm the good ship scudded, and down the coast of Spain and Portugal. Finally her prow was turned due east, and over the waves she leaped for that narrow channel above which frowns the towering rock of Gibraltar, with its tier on tier of embattled guns threatening the entrance to the blue island sea. A few hours more and the broad Atlantic was left, while the ship proudly rode the smooth waters of the Mediterranean.

During this voyage Dick was not idle, but was rapidly learning the details of a sailor's life under the tuition of Bob Backstay. He proved an apt pupil, and the old fellow grew proud of his *protege* when he saw him lay aloft with the men and help reef the foretopsail in a sweeping gale.

"You had not better risk the boy's life too much," warned the captain. "He is too green for such work."

"Can't I'arn earlier," answered old Bob. "I had him under my hand, ready to lab him out o' danger. But the boy's a sound chip o' the old block. You never see'd a firmer grip nor a truer eye. His daddy was a prime sailor, and I b'lieve the instinct is born in the lad."

A few days afterward this theory was sharply tested. They were running up the Mediterranean, to the south of Sardinia, when a sharp squall struck the ship too suddenly for preparation. Caught with all sail set, and the wind off her beam, she was crowded for a moment into the water as if she would sink bodily. Then she felt her helm, fell off, and began to gather headway through the sea. But she staggered under her press of sail, and some of the upper canvas was hastily let run, and efforts made to secure it. Dick, despite the sharp warning of Mr. Blake, ran hastily aloft, bound to take his trick at this new duty. The consequence which the officer had feared came to pass. Dick had hardly reached the yard, and made an effort to help the sailors gather in the bellying sail, ere a sharp swish of the canvas jerked him from his feet, and hurled him helplessly out upon the wind. In a moment he was hurtling like a rocket through the foam filled air, and the next moment plunged heavily into the tossing sea.

"Man overboard!" came the thrilling cry.

There was a rush to the side of the deck. Dick's head had just emerged from the water, and he was striking out manfully for the ship. Mr. Blake, who had watched the whole catastrophe, quickly threw overboard such buoyant articles as he could lay his hands on.

"I told the boy not to go aloft!" he cried. "What is to be done? We cannot launch a boat or go about in this gale."

"No!" said the captain, looking sternly to windward. "Only Providence can help the lad now!"

In a minute more the ship was full a mile away, driving before the squall; but in ten minutes the wind died down as suddenly as it had risen, and left only a moderate breeze in token of its fury.

"Make all sail!" cried the captain. "Hard a-port your helm! Bring her up! Steady! steady! We must go back and look for the boy; but I fancy he's food for fishes before now."

He did not know Dick Dareall, that was certain. The boy knew nothing of ocean swimming, but he had been like a cork on the waters of the North River, and was the champion swimmer of the wharf-boys of New York. This education stood him in good stead now. The sea was very rough, but he battled manfully for his life, and managed to keep himself afloat until, just as he felt his strength giving out, one of the floating objects that had been flung overboard struck against his hand.

Hastily clutching it, in a moment he was mounted upon this impromptu life-preserver, while a laugh of scorn at the storm broke from the boy's daring lips.

"Ain't goin' to drown Dusty Dick in no frog-pond like this," he muttered, as he sturdily struck out.

In a few minutes more the great hull of the Wildwing loomed out, surging down rapidly upon him. A loud cheer, that came down upon the wind to his ears, told him that he had been discovered, and in a few minutes more the ship was close by the struggling boy.

"You needn't lower a boat!" he screamed. "Fling me a rope, and I'll be on deck in a jiffy."

This was done as the ship's hull surged past. Dick grasped the rope, ran up it rapidly hand over hand, and in a minute sprung on deck, waving his wet cap in triumph.

"Can't drown Dusty Dick like you can a blind kitten!" he shouted. "But it's lucky that hencoop floated up, or I mought have swallowed salt-water afore now."

"Starboard your helm!" roared the captain. "Stand by to go about!—And see here, boy! Don't go aloft in a squall again. The Wildwing can't waste her time in picking up floating lumber."

On sailed the good ship, day and night. Past Sicily, and round the English fortress of Malta; along the southern shores of the great island of Candia; then southeastward, like a sea bird flying for southern suns, until the low African coast opened, the minarets of Alexandria broke into view, outlined against the blue Egyptian sky, and the Wildwing rounded into that world-famous harbor, in which now lay the huge iron-clads of the English fleet.

Evening fell as the Wildwing dropped anchor, while a cheer of delight broke from her soldier cargo, glad to see land once more, and gladder still to see the English flag waving in triumph from the peaks of mighty ships.

CHAPTER VII.

WALKING INTO AN OPEN TRAP.

THE ancient city of Alexandria presented a terrible aspect as Dick Dareall and Bob Backstay walked through it, and viewed the ruins of the famous old city. The Wildwing had discharged her cargo of troopers, who were glad enough to get ashore out of the reach of sea-sickness, and from the close confinement of "tween decks." But she yet rode at anchor in

the harbor, detained by the English admiral. There was a project on foot to shift the army to the Suez Canal, and all the transports in the harbor would be needed for this purpose.

Captain Hastings had rowed ashore on some business with the authorities, and had given his boat's crew permission to walk through the city, with the exception of a couple of boat-keepers. Thus it was that old Bob and Dick, who had accompanied him in the boat, found themselves ashore.

They clambered over the ruins of one of the forts which the English ships had battered into ruins some time before. The mighty balls and shells had torn it into a loose heap of earth, while its cannon were hurled about like so many playthings, some buried in the ruins of the fort, others standing upright in the earth.

"There's no mistake 'bout it, Dick," said old Bob, "but them's great guns in airnest. Why, boy, the American Revolution was fought with pop-guns alongside o' them. But if the lads then didn't have as big chunks of iron they had as big hearts. Remember that, youngster. It's the hearts that tells, arse all."

"It's easy to squat behind a big gun and tech a coal o' fire to a primin'," answered Dick, contemptuously. "'Tain't that way the Yankee boys fight."

"See here, you young rascal," cried Bob, "these English lads kin fight, too. And they won't git through this war without some hand-to-hand scrimmages, jist you mark that."

But a quiet smile showed that the old fellow was secretly pleased with Dick's patriotism. He was a full-blooded Yankee himself, and wasn't the man to go lack on his native land.

By this time they had got up into the streets of the city, and were viewing the destruction which one wild day and night of ravage had made. All the magnificent center of the city, with its banks, hotels, exchanges, churches and private dwellings, was now a heap of ruins, utterly destroyed by the deeds of that terrible night in which the army of Arabi Pasha had retreated in disorder from the city.

For more than a day and night the flames of the burning city had ascended to the heavens, while the infuriated stragglers of the army and the wild robbers of the desert had ravaged all before them, killing every European they met and pillaging and burning with savage ferocity. Many of the Europeans had escaped by banding together and fighting their way to the shores of the harbor, but the red splashes which yet showed themselves on stones and walls told of the murdering ravage of the terrible outbreak.

Old Bob's teeth set close as he walked on. He clinched his hands till the nails cut into the flesh.

"By the beard of Neptune!" he cried, "I'd like to light down on some o' the devils as did this! It's pure cussedness, Dick, and it's nothin' else. The chap as could do work like that ought to be squeezed till his soul, if he's got any, come out at his finger nails."

"I'd like to plat his hair fur him," answered Dick. "If I wouldn't make him squeal wuss nor a pig with a twisted tail, then ther's no use talkin'."

The sharp measures taken by the authorities had nearly put an end to the plundering. A number of desert robbers had been hung and others shot down in the streets, and only now and then some skulking scoundrel was caught in an attempt at robbery. Detachments of soldiery guarded the burnt district, and the two wanderers everywhere met with stern-faced sentinels patrolling the streets. But the dress of a sailor and the face of an American were good passports, and Bob and his *protege* were allowed to pass unchallenged.

Outside the burned district the native town still stood. The fire had done it some little damage, but the greater portion of it was yet unhurt. It was a dirty and poorly-built region, composed of small, squat Oriental houses, with here and there one of more solidity and pretension.

As the two friends walked on they met a different class of people from what they had yet seen. The genuine Arab now filled the streets, thin, wiry-looking men, half dressed, and with brown, scowling features. Many a dark look fell upon the two strangers, as they walked heedlessly on, and more than one of the Arabs turned as they passed, with his hand in his breast, clutching dagger or pistol, while his face grew savage with hate of the white-faced foreigners.

"It's dangerous quarters here, Dick," said old Bob. "If the English lion hadn't his paw on these chaps' throats our lives wouldn't be worth a capful of wind hereaway. Keep an eye on the dirty beggars. That chap there would have knifed us if he dared."

"Let 'em try it on," cried Dick, bravely. "I've got a bit of iron and wood here," tapping his breast pocket, "that's got six tongues. And every time it speaks it means something. If that little chap as we call a revolver says something with all its tongues, there'll be a little hole left in this here crowd."

"Best keep it where it is," answered old Bob, with a laugh. "Fight where the odds ain't too big, but don't fight where they are too big, that's my motto. When the kicks is bound to be all one-sided, it's best to keep your feet in your pockets. Mind that, boy."

"I'm afeard I'd have my kick anyhow," returned Dick. "I've fit three to one afore now, and come up all shinin'."

"Three to one!" answers Bob, contemptuously. "Lord, I'd take six to one of these beggars. But when it comes to a crowd, Dick."

Dick laughed merrily at old Bob's idea of fair odds. They were now in the thickest region of the native town; a dangerous spot, in fact, though they did not know it. They had met no soldiers for some time. Detachments of troops were posted on the outskirts of the native town, but this portion of the streets was left unguarded.

They had entered a **very** narrow street, bordered by low, dilapidated houses. In the middle of the avenue, however, stood one house of more pretension, a stout-built brick mansion of two stories in height, with a wide gateway leading to the interior court-yard, which is found in all Egyptian mansions.

In front of this house stood a group of men different in appearance from any they had yet seen. They were tall, spare, wiry-looking fellows, dressed in long cloaks of black and white striped stuff. On their heads yellow handkerchiefs were twisted to take the place of turbans. Their faces were brown in hue, and tanned almost to blackness, while their expression had in it something wild and fanatical. There was also a haughty pride which was not seen in the faces of the townsmen.

"Who are them fellers?" asked Dick, pausing in surprise.

"They belong to the wild desert tribes," answered Bob. "What folks call the Bedouins. I've seen 'em afore. Mighty ugly beggars they are, too, to catch a chap astray. Seems to me, Dick, we've poked our nose into danger."

He looked irresolutely back, as if with intention of retreating. But the part of the street through which they had come was now crowded with a throng of bare-legged Arabs, who were surveying them with scowling faces.

"Shiver my timbers if we ain't walked into a trap!" growled Bob.

"Then let's walk out of it," cried Dick, boldly. "Bet high them fellers is all brag and no backbone."

He walked resolutely forward, accompanied by his old friend. With an air of perfect indifference they advanced, and pushed their way into the group of Bedouins, who filled the street from side to side. The latter seemed irresolute, though their faces were full of hatred of the daring strangers.

Dick and Bob had already reached the center of the crowd, when one sturdy fellow placed himself square across their way, and held out his arm as if to dispute their passage.

"Git out, you catamaran!" exclaimed Bob.

The fellow muttered something in Arabic, but showed no signs of moving.

In an instant the old sailor's hard fist took him square between the eyes, and he went down like an ox struck by a bullet.

"Peg out, boy!" shouted Bob. "Show the dogs a clean wake."

He sprang forward, followed by Dick, who had drawn his pistol. One chap caught the boy by the shoulder, but the pistol flashed in his face, and the bullet rent a hole through his turban. He fell back in alarm, while Dick dashed on.

It looked for a moment as though they would escape. Bob had broken through the line of Bedouins, rolling another in the dust in doing so, while Dick was close at his heels, revolver in hand.

But two stout chaps flung themselves before the boy, one striking up his pistol hand, while the other grasped him by the wrist, and jerked him back toward the open gateway of the mansion.

The pistol exploded, sending its ball whizzing uselessly through the air.

Bob turned on hearing the report, and a glare of lion-like fury rushed into his face as he saw the boy surrounded by a crowd of Arabs, who were jostling him back toward the gateway. Dick fought valiantly, but the pistol had been wrenched from his hand, and his boyish strength

was of no avail against the group of vigorous ruffians who held him.

"Run for your life!" yelled Dick to the old sailor. "Stir up the sojers, and fetch 'em round here double quick!"

But this was not the old man's way. With the leap of a mastiff he was back upon the ruffians, striking right and left with fists and arms, which had been hardened by the storms of fifty years.

Down they went before him, like cornstalks before the knife of the reaper, and the villains drew back in momentary dismay from before the swinging blows of the furious sailor.

He had nearly made his way through the throng to the side of the boy. One or two blows more would have cleared the track. But at that moment the ruffianly crew, in shame at being driven back by a single man, closed in on him with a wild yell of rage. A dozen hands clasped him by hair, shoulders and arms, and though the old man continued to fight like a fury, he was soon helplessly hampered. Hammered and hustled by the yelling and maddened throng, he was dragged after the boy through the open gateway into the court-yard of the mansion, followed by the crowd of furious Arabs, while the street doors were shut with a clang behind them. Five minutes afterward a patrol of English troops passed through the street, marching stolidly between the lines of scowling Egyptians who lined the sidewalks. But nothing suspicious appeared, and the squad marched on, undreaming that behind the closed gateway of the mansion which they passed a couple of Americans lay prisoners in the hands of a raging crew of Bedouins.

The captives could not have given the alarm if they had wished, for they lay bound hand and foot, while beside each knelt a fierce Arab, holding a hand on his mouth and a dagger to his breast.

The steady tread of marching feet came to their ears. In a minute more it had passed, and quickly died away in the distance. The kneeling Arabs rose and sheathed their daggers, looking down disdainfully on the helpless prisoners.

"Yes, you bloody beggars," growled Bob. "You know we can yell our throats out for nothin' now, blast ye!"

"Why didn't you run, Bob, when I told you?" asked Dick.

"Weren't my way," grumbled Bob. "Can't run when the fight's in me."

"Thought it was your motto never to fight ag'in' odds!"

"So it is. But I never yit see'd the time that a motto could hold a man when the devil was awake in him."

Dick laughed heartily at Bob's philosophy. His buoyant spirits were beginning to rise again.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MIDNIGHT FLIGHT.

THERE was a stir on the quay at Alexandria when Captain Hastings returned to his boat, and found that his main oarsman was missing. Bob Backstay had not returned, and his boy

protege had also failed to make his appearance.

The angry captain roared out a volley of oaths, as if that was likely to mend the matter. After he had sworn off a part of his spleen he set himself to think.

"I'd as soon expect myself to skulk from duty as Bob Backstay," he said.

"If I mought put in an opinion, sir," ventured the coxswain, "it ain't old Bob's way. There's summat happened to the old chap. It's a dangerous town, is this here, as ye know."

"By Jove, you're right," cried the captain. "He may have got into trouble with these treacherous cut-throats of Arabs. I'd as soon lose a right arm as have old Bob made mince-meat of by the murdering hounds."

He sprung hastily ashore again, and hurried back into town, where he lost no time in stirring up the officials, and in having a search ordered for the missing seamen. He himself and his boat's crew also scoured the streets and alleys of the town. A couple of hours were thus spent, but no trace of Bob or his companion could be found. Some of the sentries had observed them, going toward what was known to be the most dangerous district of the city, but a search of this region proved fruitless. Finally Captain Hastings returned reluctantly to his ship, leaving the matter in charge of the military officers in command.

It would have been no easy matter to find the two captives, in fact. They had been carried to a retired room, in the rear of the upper floor of the mansion, and left there, tied hand and foot, and under the charge of two truculent barbarians, who, dagger in hand, watched over them with scowling looks.

"We're in a roarin' tight scrape, Dick," muttered the old man. "But we're alive yet, thank the stars. Somehow I've a notion it ain't murder they mean. 'Cause if it was they wouldn't wasted time in preliminaries."

"If they're goin' to chop us up I don't see no use in 'em wastin' time," returned Dick. "I ain't in no hurry to be put on a choppin'-block, but if it's goin' to be done there's no sense in keepin' a feller hangin' on a hook."

"There's summat else in the wind, boy. The thing was too sot to be a murderin' dodge. Jist keep yer level, and we'll sail into harbor yit."

"Ain't no back-down in me," answered Dick.

"I ain't the kind that skeers easy."

Their conversation was brought to an end by their guards, who approached them with threatening movements, and some wild jabber of talk. Immediately after several others of their captors entered the room, among them a haughty, stolid old fellow, rather better dressed than the others. He seemed the leader of the gang.

An active conversation in Arabic followed, which sounded to Dick like the cackling of so many geese. But old Bob held his head to one side with a knowing air, as if he was making some meaning out of their talk.

At the end of an interval the chief approached the prisoners, and spoke to them in broken English, which he pronounced with a villainous accent.

"We are going to take you away," was the

thread of his discourse. "Keep quiet and we won't harm you. But if you try to make a noise you go to the fishes."

"That's comfor'ble news," answered Bob, shrugging his shoulders. "You never see'd a mouse quieter nur I'll be. I've got a notion there's better use fur old sailors than to make fish bait."

"Couldn't git a whimper out o' me with a double-barreled pump," averred Dick. "'Cept I see a good show," he continued, in an aside, "and then I'll yell like forty-horse thunder."

The old chief seemed to vaguely understand their meaning. He nodded his head approvingly, and remarked:

"Knife Inglis very quick, if no keep mum."

"English!" roared Bob. "We're not English, blast yer pictur! We're true-blooded Americans. Genuine Yankees. Reg'lar Plymouth rockers! Ye're barkin' up the wrong tree, Mister Sheik."

"Yankees!" repeated the sheik, in a dubious tone. "You Yankee? Boy Yankee?"

"Both on us. Ye're a-wiping yer feet on the stars and stripes, old man, when you meddle with Uncle Sam's boys."

A hasty jabbering conversation followed, in which there appeared to be some difference of opinion. It ended in the leader's again approaching the prisoners.

"You go," he announced. "Want Inglis, but Yankee do. Must go." He waved his hand expressively, as if to indicate that it was too late to rectify the mistake. Turning on his heel the sheik quickly left the room, followed by all but the guards.

Old Bob addressed one of these, but received for answer only a shake of the head from both. They evidently understood no English.

"All right," he muttered. "I ain't been kicked round the world for nothin', Dick. I know summat o' their lingo. Picked up the gist o' their prating."

"What was it?" asked Dick curiously.

"We're to be took to the rebel ginerel, Arabi, my boy. These chaps has been sent out as scouts to pick up an Englisher, and nabbed us by mistake. 'Tain't much news he'll git out of us. But there's no use tellin' these fellows as we're ignoramus. They wouldn't b'lieve it."

"What's to do then?" asked Dick.

"Slide, if we see a chance. Go, if we don't. That's the whole programme."

"It's a mighty short one," muttered Dick.

"But I s'pose ther's no gettin' away from the circus till the performance is over."

Night was now rapidly approaching. In two hours more darkness descended on the streets and houses of the city, in the sudden way in which it usually falls in tropical regions.

The captives were brought some food as night approached, which they ate with a relish, despite their ticklish position. It was late in the night ere any further movement took place. The guards still kept awake, looking like bronze statues as the light of the oil lamp fell on their dark features. But the captives were sound asleep, and had been for hours when the Bedouin leader again entered the room.

He stood for a minute, looking at them with

some approval in his dark features. He then gave orders for them to be awakened. Old Bob was wide awake at a touch, but Dick lay looking stupidly around him, and muttering:

"Why don't you let a feller have his snooze out? 'Tain't breakfast time yit. I jist ain't goin' to git up, 'cept you've got buckwheat cakes and sassage for breakfast."

A few words from Bob brought him to a realizing sense of the situation, but he continued to growl as the bonds were removed from his ankles and he was made to stand up.

"We've got to emigrate, Dick," said the old sailor. "And we'd best walk the line level, 'cause these chaps'll knife us if we say as much as beans is beans."

"But wouldn't I give a new hat to have my hands untied and a grip of that there revolver ag'in?" muttered the boy.

Threatening looks and words and a flourish of daggers admonished the captives to the virtue of silence. They were led from the room and out of the house with a stout chap holding them by the elbows on either side, while the rest of the party crowded closely around them.

The night was dark, and not a soul was in sight. The captives were hurried at a quick step along the street, and through other narrow avenues, in a direction toward the harbor. It was not many minutes ere they reached the water-side at a deserted point. Not far to their right and left lay two of the ruined forts of the Arabs, looking lonely and desolate in the night shadows. As they neared the water-edge two men hastily started up, and some words in Arabic passed between them and the Bedouins.

"The coast's clear, Dick," whispered Bob. "They're afeared of the English guards on the land side, so they're goin' to try and slip us through by water."

"Hope they'll git overtook," answered Dick, in the same tone.

A boat now appeared, concealed behind a heap of earth in easy view from shore. The party entered it quickly but quietly, forcing their prisoners into a position in the stern sheets. In a minute more the oars were out, and they moved silently out from the shore.

Well out in the harbor, their position marked by the dim light of ship lamps, lay several great, phantom-like monsters, the huge iron-clads of the British blockading fleet. Several of them were vaguely visible from the position of the boat, and it was rowed in a direction to round the prow of the innermost frigate at a safe distance.

The oars rose and fell in the water almost silently. Evidently the Arab rowers were well trained to their work. Over the dark waters they slowly moved, the dark shore line not far off to their left, the looming phantom of the iron-clad well out to their right.

Gliding half-way between the vessel and the shore, their dark forms hardly visible on the shadowy water surface, their oars working stealthily, the boat moved on almost like a ghost.

They had passed the vessel and rounded again into the outer harbor, heading for a line of land not visible from where they were, when a sharp-

eyed sentinel on the vessel's deck caught a glimpse of something suspicious creeping over the still surface of the water.

"Who goes there?" he challenged, in a loud, sharp voice.

No answer; but the rowers bent more vigorously to their oars.

"Halt, or I fire!"

The boat shot rapidly onward, there being now no effort to avoid noise.

A sharp report came from the deck of the iron clad. The water spurted, and a dull thud broke the air, as a bullet struck the surface close by the boat.

With set lips the rowers bent to their oars, making the water foam under the cutwater of their sharp-bowed skiff.

Several other shots were fired, more wildly than the first. Then there suddenly flashed out from the deck of the huge vessel a light that glowed like a miniature sun. Its glare brought out the lines of the vessel with startling distinctness, and made the harbor in the immediate vicinity as light as day. An electric light had been kindled.

The fugitive boat, now more than a quarter of a mile away, was plainly visible in the outer circle of this bright glare. To the left a well-manned patrol boat rowed up into the line of light, in swift pursuit. But the fugitives had a good start, and rowed on with all their strength, heedless that shots continued to patter on the water close around them.

"The beggars have stuck us in the stern to stop the first bullet as comes aboard," growled old Bob surlily.

His Arab guard grasped his shoulder, and pressed the point of a dagger against his breast so sharply that the old man felt it in his flesh. A warning shake of the head accompanied the expressive action.

"Ay! ay!" muttered Bob, and relapsed into silence.

The boat shot rapidly onward. The electric light faintly revealed the line of shore for which they were bound, and it rose fast into prominence as they cut through the foaming water. At a considerable distance in the rear came on the patrol boat, its crew laying lustily down to their oars.

In a few minutes the chase was a hot one. The pursuing boat gained slowly, but it was evident that the fugitive would reach the shore in advance. And it was now too far away for rifle-shots to be effective. Through the still night pursuer and pursued rushed at their utmost speed. Five anxious minutes passed, and then the Arab boat ran her nose well up on the dark shore line, and her crew sprung to their feet with a cry of triumph.

The Bedouins grasped their prisoners and hurried them inshore, leaving the Arab boatmen to look after their craft. It was a sandy spit, with some bushy growth not far back. Behind this they hurried, captors and captives. Hastily onward up the beach, half-dragging the two unwilling Americans to where a long, low line of buildings rose dimly against the dark background.

Rounding this building, some open sheds were

revealed, with a line of horses standing within them, under the care of a brace of Bedouins.

These were hastily led out, ready saddled for the road, and the wild nomads quickly leaped to the saddle, with a cry of savage triumph.

Bob and Dick were forced to mount two of these animals, and were firmly bound upon their backs. Hastily the cavalcade rode out into the open ground.

They were ready to start, but first the sheik, with a gesture of wild triumph, rode down to the beach and waved his long spear in the air, while a yell of defiance burst from his lips.

He was answered by a cry from the inmates of the patrol boat that was now not far out from shore. There came also a sharp crack, and a rifle-bullet whistled past him.

With another defiant wave of his spear, and another wild cry, he turned his steed and galloped up the slope. Reaching the group of horsemen, he spoke to them without checking his speed. Instantly the cavalcade was set in motion, the two captives in the midst, and the sound of hoofs broke on the still night air.

The troop was off for the desert, rushing like a meteor through the night, at the full speed of the far-famed Arab horses.

CHAPTER IX.

A FLIGHT FOR THE DESERT.

A SINGLE wild yell of triumph rose from the Bedouin troop, as their mettled steeds rushed down the slope of the slight elevation, and their hoofs struck the sandy soil at its foot. They were at home again, with the desert sands beneath their horses' hoofs, and they flung their spears wildly in the air and caught them in their hands, as they galloped on through the shadowy night at a speed that defied pursuit.

Just what the two prisoners thought, as they felt themselves being haled away at the marvelous speed of Arab horses, we cannot say. But their sensations were certainly not of the most agreeable.

Soon the hoofs struck heavier soil, and the speed of the troop was sensibly checked, yet the mettled steeds needed no spur nor whip to bring them up to their utmost work. A finger touch on the reins, an encouraging word, was alone needed by these well-trained and intelligent animals.

Through a low-lying, shadowy landscape they drove onward. Now a peasant's hut rose through the gloom; now they flashed past some massive ruin of the far past; now the yelp of some suddenly-wakened cur broke on the air; now voices were heard as the rushing troop roused some lightly-sleeping Egyptian. Some three hours of this headlong flight, and then a faint glow to the east spoke of the coming day. The night had passed.

In less than a half-hour more the sun's rim peeped above the horizon, and a stream of light poured across the low-lying land. The eyes of the youthful captive looked curiously upon the scene revealed by these far-streaming sunbeams, with the interest of one who first beholds new lands. Far to their left spread a broad, level country, of fertile alluvial soil, for

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they were in the rich lands of the Nile Delta, a country built up by the mud deposits of thousands of years.

Many peasant huts marked this scene, the most of the proprietors being already in their fields, working stolidly away, with scarce a glance at the cavalcade that rode past.

To the right a different scene presented itself. A broad sheet of water stretched out before them, as far as the eye could reach, its wavelets gently lapping the beach, as they curled before a fresh breeze.

"What is that?" asked Dick, curiously. "I thought we were riding away from the ocean."

"So we are," answered Bob. "That's the Lake Mareotis. It's a broad sheet that lies to the south of Alexandria."

"Then we're not goin' to Arabi's camp?" continued Dick. "For it lies off to the west of the town, and we're travelin' south like mad."

"Hope ye didn't s'pose these chaps was fools enough to ride through the British lines," growled Bob. "They've got to circumvent this here lake to fetch the rebel army, and it's a good fifty mile ride if it's an inch."

"Jist wish they'd take the string off my feet and hands for awhile," muttered Dick. "I'd make a break fur freedom if I got shot for it."

"That's jist what'd come of it," rejoined Bob. "You'd git shot. These ain't no babies, I tell you now. Can't fool yer time with these desert chaps. You'd best mind your eye."

"Mought as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," growled Dick, surlily. "Don't let 'em giv me the chance, that's all."

Hours passed away. As they got further south the breeze died out, and the climbing sun got hotter and hotter, until the air seemed to burn like a flame. They gained the southern extremity of the lake and rounded to the westward, with scarce a moment's cessation in their wild flight. Yet hardly a flock showed on the sleek coats of the horses, and they seemed as fresh as if they had just left their stables. They had marvelous powers of endurance.

They now left the fertile soil of the Delta and struck upon an entirely different stretch of country. A hard sandy and gravelly soil lay before them, flat as a hand, and without a leaf or a blade of grass to meet the vision in the whole broad expanse.

A new light came into the eyes of the Bedouins and a cry of gratification broke from their lips. The horses too snorted gladly and darted forward with new speed. It was the desert at last, the true home of the wild wandering Arab, which stirs his soul to its depths as the sight of his native hills does the soul of a mountaineer.

"The rogues are at home now, Dick," said the old sailor. "The sand under their feet is like the waves under the feet of an old salt. And their home is like the ocean in one way. For hundreds of miles this sand rolls on as level as the ocean floor. For thousands of miles, I should say, for it spreads out yonder into the great Sahara, the premium desert of the world, which never halts till the Atlantic is reached and its sands join the sands of the sea."

"I have heered of it," averred Dick.

"And I have crossed it," continued Bob. "A square thousand miles of sand, with hardly a

bit of rock or a stretch of fertile sile. And fresh water as scarce as in the middle of the sea. Mor'n once I've rid a hundred miles and over without a drop of water, 'cept a bit we carried in leather bottles."

"I'd like to taste some now," answered Dick. "I'm as dry inside as a limekiln."

"We'll soon have it, my lad. Do you see where these chaps is headin'?" He pointed toward where a group of slender columns rose in the distance, with a dome-like canopy at their tops. "Them's date-palms, Dick; the tree of the desert. We'll find a spring or a well at their foot."

As they came nearer, Dick made out clearly one of the most graceful sights that the earth holds, a group of palms, with their tall, straight, slender trunks, and their verdant crown of long drooping leaves, outlined beautifully against the blue Egyptian sky.

In ten minutes more the desert oasis was reached, and the Bedouins sprang from their horses. The mouth of a well opened in the center of the group of palms, while around it spread a luxuriant growth of grass, which the horses dipped with hungry haste.

The prisoners were now released and suffered to dismount. Their hands, too, were untied, as if their captors disdained to keep them longer bound. Indeed escape seemed hopeless, with that desert reach around them, and a half-score of armed desert riders surrounding.

Water was quickly drawn from the shallow well, and given to the horses, who drank with avidity. Afterward the men helped themselves and their prisoners. It was the true desert fashion, horse before man.

Next a frugal repast was spread on the sands, consisting of squares of hard cheese, of long strips of dried mutton, and of cakes of millet that needed sharp teeth for their mastication. But appetite gives a relish to the dryest provender, and the desert fare was devoured with as much avidity as if it had been the most luxurious of viands.

The frugal meal over the Bedouins stretched themselves in the shadow of the trees, evidently for a noon siesta. The horses were cast loose, with the assurance that they would not stray far from the luxuriant grass of the oasis. Only one of the Arabs remained on guard.

"They are takin' it mighty easy, seems to me," said Dick, nursing his knees, as he sat on the sand.

"Faith! I'm glad of it," rejoined old Bob. "I'm no more eager than them to ride in a scorcher like this. Let's stretch out and take a snooze, my boy."

"Let's make a break for a pair of hosses, while they're snoozin'," suggested Dick. "We kin knock the pins from under that scout and dig out."

The old sailor cogitated for a minute. Then he shook his head.

"Won't do," he answered. "These chaps sleep like a leaf. A breath'll wake 'em. And we can't ride the desert horses like them. They'd run us down in a jiffy."

Dick sat silently brooding for ten minutes. Then he remarked, with a gesture of boyish impatience:

"Hang if I'm goin' to rust here! I'll snatch a hoss and ride one way, and while they're arter me you kin snatch another hoss and ride t'other. One or both on us mought git off."

Without waiting for a reply the hasty lad sprung to his feet, and leaped for one of the horses, which at that moment had strayed close beside him. The agility which his limbs promised was now quickly shown, for he was in the saddle with the spring of a panther. Ere the astonished guard, who had been leaning on his long spear in a dreamy attitude, could recover his faculties, Dick had grasped the reins, turned his horse's head to the desert, and dug his heels into the animal's sides.

With a yell of alarm the guard rushed for him, brandishing his spear. In an instant the whole camp was awake. With the alertness of desert life the Bedouins sprung to their feet, and grasped their weapons. But the fugitive was already in full flight. The mettled horse, not used to such rough treatment, had sprung forward with a snort of anger, and dashed at breakneck speed for the desert, the boy clinging like a monkey to his back.

It had all passed in an instant. Yet the Arabs were too accustomed to surprises to be taken aback. Some ran for their horses. Others grasped the remaining prisoner, who had continued motionless, knowing well the uselessness of the effort. Dick was not a hundred yards away ere the guard and the old sheik were on horseback. A cry from the leader checked other Bedouins from mounting, and the two pursuers put themselves immediately on Dick's trail.

The horses of the pursuers seemed to instinctively feel the work that was required of them. Stirred only by encouraging words, and guided by a finger touch on the reins, they sprung forward with the speed of the gazelle, and in an instant the chase was in full progress, the fugitive scarce two hundred yards in advance.

Dick was not without knowledge of horsemanship. He had ridden barebacked horses in the country at home, and could keep his seat like a monkey. But he knew nothing of the points of an Arab horse, and his hard hand on the rein, and the pressure of his heels on the animal's side, only served to madden the intelligent steed. After its first few wild leaps it dropped into a sulky pace, from which Dick's utmost efforts could not rouse it.

Behind him came now the two fierce pursuers, sitting their horses like statues. Yet, without laying a finger's weight upon them, they had brought them to a speed that was simply marvelous. Like the wind they darted onward, spurning the sand beneath their unshod hoofs.

Scarcely a quarter of a mile had been passed ere they were within spear reach of the flying boy. The guard brandished his long spear in his hand, and would have flung it with deadly aim, but that a word from his companion checked his hand. On they rode until they were not six feet behind the fugitive boy.

At this moment there was a diversion in the chase. Dick's horse, tormented and angered by his unskillful treatment, suddenly came to a dead halt, and flung his heels in the air with vicious rage.

This unexpected movement had its natural effect. The horse stopped but Dick went on, over his ears, and landed with a heavy thud on the hard sand, ten yards ahead. There he lay, motionless, with his face to the sky, a faint quiver in his limbs the only sign of life.

The two Arabs rode up and halted their horses beside him. At an order from the sheik the other reached down the head of the spear, and stirred the fallen boy. No movement followed. All his senses seemed shaken out of him by the fall.

A conversation ensued between the two men that lasted for some minutes. Then, to the horror of the old sailor, he saw the chief draw from his breast the revolver which had been taken from Dick the night before. Bending from his saddle he took quick aim and pulled the trigger. A sharp report woke the echoes of the desert, and rung like a thunder clap in old Bob's ears.

No second shot was required. A bullet-hole pierced Dick's coat, immediately above his heart. A momentary twitch as the ball struck him, and his limbs stretched out moveless, while his pallid face was upturned to the scorching Egyptian sky.

Catching the loose horse the two Arabs rode back, leaving their victim on the sands. The angry old sailor burst into a furious remonstrance, but it was utterly unheeded. In a minute he was forced to mount, and was bound upon his horse. By this time all the Bedouins were ready, and the cavalcade set out, riding, as if in mockery, close by the body of the motionless boy.

Old Bob caught a glimpse of the deathly pallid face, and he shut his eyes with a groan, while a revengeful feeling rose in his heart.

In five minutes the oasis lay far behind them, with the unburied corpse calling with pallid face for retribution on its murderers.

CHAPTER X.

NOT SO DEAD AS HE SEEMED.

THE sun again hangs low in the West. But a very different scene surrounds us from that of the last sunset. Instead of the streets of a city, or the desert reaches of the last chapter, we find ourselves in the midst of a busy camp. Long lines of tents stretch around us. In front are the defensive earthworks of an army at bay, mounted with cannon, and guarded by alert sentinels. Around us are throngs of soldiers; some marching rapidly from point to point of the camp; some under drill; others gathered around open-air fires, which give out the odors of the kitchen, as the mess suppers are being prepared. It is a busy and interesting spectacle, and is rendered more so by the occasional roar of a distant cannon, and the swish of a great ball as it drives through the air overhead, or plunges into the face of an earthwork. An answering gun from the earthworks sends a return ball into the hostile camp, and then all relapses into silence. It is the mere by-play of two resting armies.

The soldiers around us are partly in uniform, but many of them wear the scant dress of the Egyptian *fellah*, while they nearly all wear the red fez cap, which is the distinctive head-dress

of the country. It does not need this, however, to show that we are in the ranks of the Egyptian army. There are no signs here of the method and rigid discipline we would find in the English camp. In front of a large tent, made of red and white striped cloth, and overhung with the lazy folds of a drooping flag, stood a group of officers—richly-dressed, fine-looking men the most of them, their bronzed faces showing the effects of a tropic sun. In their midst was one less showily dressed, yet whose haughty face and commanding manner showed the instinct of a leader. And the deference shown him by the others showed that they stood in the presence of Arabi Bey, the rebel general, who had roused up his country to revolt, and hurled defiance in the face of Europe.

Before this group of officers, presenting a strange contrast in dress and appearance, stood the Bedouin troops, their sheik at their head, while between the two parties was their prisoner, old Bob Backstay, his hands still bound.

The old sailor stood erect and defiant, his eyes full of fire, his face working with repressed emotions.

"An American never answers questions with his hands tied," he boldly responded to some inquiry of the rebel general.

"An American?" cried Arabi, in very good English.

"Yes. Full-blooded Yankee to the backbone. And these galoots knowed it, too, when they tuk me."

Arabi turned angrily to the Bedouins, and questioned them sharply in Arabic. An earnest conversation followed, in which they seemed trying to explain away some mistake. It ended by one of them hastily untying old Bob's hands.

"These fools have made an awkward mistake," explained the general. "I am not at war with Americans. I commissioned them to bring me some English officer, or man in authority, from whom I might squeeze certain desired information. And the hounds bring me a man from a country that must be in sympathy with all men struggling for liberty."

"Just prove to us that it's liberty ye're wantin'," cried old Bob, with enthusiasm, "and the whole Yankee nation will back you up, and lend you a copy of that star-spangled banner that never yet went down before an enemy."

This speech brought a cry of approval from such of the group as understood English. A smile came even upon Arabi's haughty features. He spoke rapidly to the officers surrounding him. Evidently Bob had made a favorable impression.

A few questions to the prisoner followed, but he soon showed that he could give them no useful information, as he had only landed in Alexandria the day before, and had been taken prisoner ere he was two hours on the streets. He took good care to say nothing about the English troops brought out by the Wildwing.

Again Arabi conversed with his officers in earnest tones. He then turned to the prisoner, saying:

"There has been an awkward mistake here, old man. You are no longer a prisoner. I am

not warring with Americans. You are free to return to the city; but if you will enter my service I will make it worth your while."

Old Bob was silent for a minute before replying. He then said:

"I was not taken alone, sir. There was a boy with me, who was shot in the desert by that murderin' pirate." He turned and pointed to the sheik, while his wrinkled face worked with revengeful rage. "That boy lies dead on the sands. I will not say a word or lift a hand until I have buried him. Then I may enter your service, if only for the chance to revenge the murdered lad." His look was so fierce that the sheik turned pale, and shrunk back among his followers.

Arabi's face grew red with anger. He addressed a few short, sharp sentences to the confused leader of the Bedouins, who seemed unable to reply. Another word, and one of them left the group and strode hastily away. He was gone for several minutes, when he reappeared, leading the Arab steed which old Bob had ridden all that day.

"There," cried the rebel leader. "Mount and away. Bury your friend and return to me. You will not regret entering the service of Arabi Pasha."

Old Bob looked at the horse, and bluntly answered:

"That animile isn't made of iron, yer honor. He's traveled since daybreak, and wants a night's snooze. As for me I'm not used to horseback, and am a'most split in two. Let me bunk to-night, and I'll be off at sunrise to-morrow."

"Very well," answered Arabi, with a smile. He spoke to an officer, who motioned the sailor to follow him. In a few minutes the old man found himself provided with shelter and rations and was bade a courteous "good-night" by the Egyptian officer.

At daybreak the next day he was up and about, in the already aroused camp. The horse had been quartered near him, and seemed as ready as he for the road. Devouring a hasty meal, and providing himself with rations for his journey, old Bob mounted the mettled steed. He was accompanied through the camp by an officer, many an angry look being cast upon him by the fanatical Mussulmen, by whom every Christian was viewed with hatred. But soon the camp limits were passed, the horse gladly neighed as his hoofs struck the open sands, and waving a good-by to his conductor the old man rode boldly forth.

"I'm afeared it may be a long day afore you see me ag'in, Mr. Arabi," he muttered. "Though I don't feel like leavin' this country till I've settled the hash of that there sheik, darn his ugly pictur'."

The horse eagerly snuffed the fresh morning air, and darted rapidly forward beside the waters of the lake, on which now fell the early rays of the rising sun.

At the same hour over another portion of the same region, there slowly moved a youthful figure, whose appearance would have made the old man's heart leap for joy, could he have seen him. For it was no other than the form of Dick Dareall, whom he expected to find stretched dead upon the sands by the desert well.

How came he here alive? That story we must leave Dick to tell for himself. Where he now was the desert had vanished, and the alluvial land of the Nile region spread around him. He was not ten miles distant from the great river of Egypt. Here the huts of the Egyptian peasantry came into view. The weary lad seated himself on a rounded knoll, and overlooked the fertile country below him.

"I s'pose I ought to be dead," he remarked, with a shrug. "'Tain't that old coon's fault that I've got my heels on the sand yit. He done his best to peg me out, only he didn't know that Dusty Dick was a salamander."

He continued his reflections, as his eyes roamed curiously over the scene.

"My English uncle didn't calkerlate he was givin' me my life when he guv me that purse. A whole street in Chester wouldn't been wuth as much as that one little bit of gold." He took from his breast pocket the purse which he had received in the streets of Liverpool. Inserting his fingers he took out the only coin it held, a gold guinea, which seemed bent and battered.

"I'd have been dead meat only fur this little chap," he continued, as he affectionately surveyed the coin. "It cotched a bullet as was makin' a straight wake fur my heart. That bit o' lead has sp'iled Queen Vic's beauty; but there's other photygraphs of the old lady, and there ain't no other Dusty Dick. I'm goin' to keep that pictur' as long as I live, you bet."

He rose and replaced the purse, with its precious coin, in his pocket. Strangely enough his life had been saved by the single remnant of his uncle's gift.

Dick had walked many miles since he had regained his senses beside the desert well. Taking a hearty drink, and devouring the few relics of the Arabs' dinner, he had walked the night through, and found himself, with the morning light, in the midst of cultivated land. Just before him was an Egyptian hut, about which were no signs of life. The boy boldly advanced, and entered it by the open door. It was empty, and seemed to have been so for days. Probably its tenant had been drafted into Arabi's army.

Not troubling himself to ask many questions, Dick rummaged the hut, and succeeded in bringing to light some dried-up remnants of food, and a bag full of dried dates. On this he seized with avidity, and devoured the food as rapidly as he could without water to soften it.

While eating he continued his explorations, and soon discovered a parcel of Egyptian clothing, of a boy's size. An idea quickly shot into his sharp brain. No Christian's life was worth a moment's purchase in Egypt just then. If he cared for safety he must play the Egyptian. No sooner thought than done. Hastily throwing off his outer clothing he donned that of the Egyptian boy, and found it an excellent fit. A dash of brown pigment, which he also found, on his face and hands, and his complexion took on the bronzed Egyptian hue. He laughed to himself as he thrust the fez cap on his tangled hair.

"Ain't I a hunky boy?" he exclaimed.

"Don't b'lieve old Arabi hisself 'd know me. I'm jist transmogrified, and I'm bound to see a bit of this here Egypt afore I streak back fur Ameriky."

Without a thought that his Saxon features, or his ignorance of the language, might betray him, Dick left the hut, first securing the bag of dates, and made his way eastward across the valley of the Nile.

His journey took him past many fertile fields, in which the Egyptian laborers were busy working. Many glances were cast upon him as he passed, but no one seemed to take him for aught but an Egyptian. So far his disguises proved a success.

It was approaching noon when he saw before him a clump of dwellings, forming the first village he had yet met. At the same time a sound came to his ears that made him leap with surprise. For the moment he fancied himself in America, for he had not dreamed of such a sound in the land of the Pharaohs. It was the shrill whistle of a locomotive.

"Hunky ag'in!" cried Dick, with delight. "That's jist boss. I'm a-goin' fur that there train and if I steal a ride it won't be the fust time. Guess I kin show 'em some Yankee tricks in that line."

Reaching the village he discovered that it was a railway station. The long, familiar iron lines ran past as straight as a die. Soon the whistling locomotive ran in, while all the inmates of the place hastened to the station, as if this was the one event of their lives.

The train consisted of a single passenger, and a half dozen freight cars. It halted for a moment in the village, and then steamed on. But it carried out one more passenger than it had brought in. Dick Dareall was on board, crouched on the top of one of the freight cars.

Onward ran the train, at a moderate speed, over the level and fertile plain of Egypt, busy now with the preparations for the harvest. In less than an hour they reached and crossed the Nile, on a bridge which had been thrown across the historic stream.

The great river which had for thousands of years fed and fertilized the oldest civilized land of the earth, ran sluggishly and majestically on, full almost to the level of its banks, for it was the time of the annual rise, and soon it would be pouring its muddy waters into the low lying fields that bordered it for hundreds of miles.

It was a new experience for Dick, and he eagerly watched the rude agriculture of the Egyptians, with their plow composed of a jerked stick, drawn by two lazy bullocks. The mode in which the peasants dipped water from the river for their fields, also interested him. Some used long well-sweeps, others rode water-wheels, turned by oxen, and with earthen jars on their rims. So new and attractive was all this to the boy, that the day passed quickly away, and he was surprised to hear the cry of "Cairo," as the train halted at a fine station.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAND OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

MORE than a week has passed since Dick

Dareall entered Cairo. It has been a week of doubt and danger, for the sharp young donkey-drivers, for which that city is celebrated, soon discovered that Dick was not an Egyptian, and would have worried him as dogs worry a strange cat, had he not succeeded in escaping. He had, in fact, been rescued by an old Frenchman, who still remained in the city, protected by a written safeguard from Arabi. Dick was now domiciled with the old man, to whom he had told his adventures. The latter taught him some common phrases in the Arabic language, by whose aid he might save himself from peril if again assailed. Dick had a quick tongue, and soon pronounced them like an Egyptian.

He certainly needed some protection, for it was impossible to keep the restless boy under cover. Cairo was so strange a city, and had so oriental an aspect, that it seemed to Dick as if he was wandering in the very scenes of the Arabian Nights, and as if he might at any moment meet Aladdin, or the troop of the Forty Thieves in its streets.

Its numerous domes and minarets gave it a different aspect from any European city, while the crowds of swarthy Egyptians in the streets, the long lines of camels, the endless donkeys, half buried under their burdens of fresh cut grass, the women with their closely veiled faces, only their bright eyes showing that there was a face beneath the mask, all this was strangely attractive to the American lad. Still more taking were the long bazaars, roofed in from the sun, and displaying a thousand different articles of the richest and most varied form, jewelry, carpets, cloths of Persian manufacture, until the boy's eyes were dazzled with their glow. And the constant turmoil in the bazaars, the throngs of men, women, donkeys, camels and oxen, all mingled together, every one in the way, and all shouting, screaming and appealing to the Prophet, until it seemed as if the strongest head might be turned by the uproar.

Such was the scene in whose thick the youth found himself, and as he saw the variety of faces and costumes, the jugglers and mountebanks, and the peddlers with their strange goods and odd cries, he expected nothing less than to hear some old magician crying out, "New lamps exchanged for old," and to see some idle servant run out with Aladdin's wonderful lamp. It would have astonished him little to see the magic lamp rubbed in the street, its monstrous genii called up, and the whole busy city transported bodily for a thousand miles into the desert, as in the Arabian Night marvels.

A week afterward found Dick in the midst of very different but equally strange scenes. He had wandered from the city, along the course of the Nile, and soon found himself amid the wonders of old Egypt, the grand ruins of the far past. Great stone images, with the figures of lions and faces of women, stared at him from the midst of desert sands. Then he came upon the Pyramids, mountains of stone built by human hands, before which the boy stood in an awe such as he had never before felt. Before him rose the great pyramid of Gbizeh, built of immense blocks of stone, and rising four hun-

dred and eighty feet into the air. He stood looking at it until a doubt crept into his mind that mere men had heaped these mighty stone mounds, and a half belief that they were the work of the genii of whom he had read.

In another place he came upon the ruins of the great city of Memphis, and stood looking at them with utter amazement. He was growing more and more doubtful that mere man had done this work. It seemed only fit for the hands of giants. The earth was strewn with broken statues of marble and granite, and among them figures that seemed to his excited eyes as tall as a church steeple. And there were the remains of mighty temples, with columns as thick as the trees of a forest, and towering aloft with swelling tops like the crown of a spreading palm tree. The air was cool under the shadow of these huge stone columns, and Dick wandered among them fancying that he had been suddenly taken to another world, or made the victim of the enchantment that of old was fabled to haunt these scenes.

But a familiar sound brought the romantic boy back to himself. This was the neigh of a horse, which seemed strangely out of place in that quiet and majestic scene. In a moment he was back again in the modern world, glad to escape from the heavy grandeur that had been weighing down his spirits.

Peering eagerly around he soon caught sight of the steed. It was a genuine Arab, slender-limbed, sleek and intelligent, with small head, and an eye that almost spoke. It was tethered at the foot of one of the columns, and was busily cropping the surrounding grass.

But Dick's quick eyes saw more than this. There was something familiar to him in the appearance of the horse, and as he drew nearer and noted the saddle and accouterments, with their silver mountings, he fully recognized the animal. It was the horse of the Bedouin sheik who had shot him in the desert.

"Wonder if it ain't my turn now?" cried Dick, with delight. "The old chap stole my revolver, and shot me with it. S'pose I steal his hoss? What's good fur the goose is good fur the gander, I calkerlate. Where is the old cove, anyhow?"

The boy turned back, and made his way through the pillars of the ruined temple toward where he saw a glimpse of color in the warm sunlight. Reaching the edge of a rubbish-heap, and gazing down the slight declivity, he beheld what he partly expected. There sat the old sheik, dressed in a gay-colored robe and turban. He was crouched on a fragment of a statue, and busily munching some dried dates, which he drew from a bag at his side.

The slight noise made by Dick drew his attention, and he looked hastily up. In an instant he had sprung to his feet, his eyes dilated with horror, while his hands were extended as if to repel some dreadful object. His sharp eyes had at a glance recognized Dick's face, as he stood in the bright light, outlined against the column behind him. To the superstitious mind of the old Bedouin, it seemed the spirit of the murdered boy come back to torment him for his deed.

"You'd best be skeered, old hoss," cried

Dick, in a sepulchral tone. "I'm a-goin' to haunt you now, you bet. You can't howl round here shootin' Yankee boys."

The old fellow did not understand these words, but he knew they were English, and his fright was redoubled. There came from his lips a loud cry of "Allah-il-Allah!" and he darted headlong down the slope, and in among the opposite ruins, frightened out of his five senses. A loud laugh that followed him seemed to his excited fancy the cry of a demon, and lent fresh wings to his flight. Dick laughed again as he saw the long cloak of the sheik streaming in the wind, like the tail of some new bird of the desert.

"The old rascal won't stop short of Chiny," cried Dick. "As long as he stole my revolver, and shot me in the bargain, a boss is only a fair swap. I'm a-goin' hot foot fur that there critter."

In five minutes afterward Dick was mounted on the sheik's horse. He had some difficulty in doing so, for the animal refused to submit to the hands of a stranger. But, by dint of some fondling, and soothing words, the daring boy succeeded in mounting the animal, and was soon cantering away from the ruins, on the back of one of the noblest horses of the desert.

As he wound out of the ruins, and struck the open sands beyond, a loud, astonished cry from behind met his ears. Swerving in the saddle Dick saw the form of the old sheik, yelling half in rage and half in fear, and apparently yet in doubt as to whether he saw a phantom or a being of flesh and blood.

Waving his hat in farewell, a triumphant shout broke from the lips of the reckless lad. Putting the horse to the gallop he rode away at a brisk pace, leaving the villainous old Arab afoot in the ruins, and ready to tear his hair with rage.

Dick's previous experience of Arab horses had taught him a word or two. As he had no desire to be flung over the ears of the animal, he took care not to bear too hard on the bit, and to keep his heels out the creature's sides.

Under this milder treatment the animal went steadily on, with the swift and gentle movement for which the Arab horses are celebrated.

Soon the reckless boy had left the baffled sheik far behind him. Onward he went, verging toward the hills that bordered the Nile valley, for the overflowing river had turned the fields into black mud, through which a horse would have helplessly floundered. Sheets of water spread on each side of the river, save where broken by higher ground, laden with that fertilizing mud which would, on the retirement of the river, be turned into waving fields of wheat and corn.

But nothing of this troubled Dick's brain, as he struck the sandy edge of the bordering hills. He had something else to think of, for at that moment another horseman suddenly appeared, emerging from behind a ruined wall.

Dick hastily drew rein and strove to turn his horse's head. The other horseman seemed to be making the same endeavor. But whether they would or not, they were doomed to come together, for, with loud neighs of recognition, the two animals rushed forward, and in a mo-

ment were rubbing noses in token of old acquaintance.

Dick lifted his eyes with a little dread. The other horseman did the same. But a loud shout broke the silence of the hills as they gazed upon each other's faces.

"Bob Backstay, or I'm a donkey!" yelled the boy.

"Dick, the stowaway, or I'm a blue-nosed mackerel!" yelled the sailor.

"How did you come here? I thought you were hung by Arabi," queried Dick.

"How did you come here? I thought you were shot by the sheik," asked Bob.

And then a wild laugh broke from the lips of the reckless boy.

"Dusty Dick didn't peg out as easy as they calkelated," he exclaimed. "And what's more, I've got even with the sheik. This is his hoss I'm ridin', and I left him back yonder skeered blue by my ghost."

Old Bob echoed the boy's laugh.

"I knowed it, Dick," he said. "I've been fol-lerin' you up. That's what brung me here. Found your old Frenchman in Cairo, and he put me on your track. But how the blazes did you tack ship on that pistol bullet?"

Dick explained how he had been strangely saved by the lucky coin that had turned the leaden ball.

"Goin' to hang on to it while there's a hair in my head," he cried. "There's luck in it; and mebbe it's all I'm likely to git from my sojer uncle."

"We've got a good horse apiece anyhow," rejoined Bob. "I move we make a break down the river for Alexandria. We must keep out of Arabi's clutches, though. He may hang me for not keeping my promise."

They rode together a few miles down the river, when, from the summit of a slight elevation, they saw something that materially changed their plans.

This was the gleam of rifle barrels, the waving of flags, and soon the appearance of a body of men, marching hastily and disorderly southward. Further north the sun glistened from other masses of steel. Evidently a hasty southward march was being made by a considerable body of soldiers. Out of their midst rode a troop of dragoons, their bright accouterments glistening as they came rapidly forward. Just then a cry of delight rose from the weary troops. They had caught sight of the distant minarets of Cairo, lit up by the descending sun.

"Let's slide," cried Dick. "It's gittin' mighty onhealthy round here."

"Let fly all, port your helm, and scud for harbor," answered Bob.

In a minute more they were skurrying back, at a rapid pace, up the Nile valley.

An hour afterward the well-mounted pair rode into Cairo, considerably in advance of the coming troops. They made the best of their way to the house of the hospitable Frenchman.

"Something's bu'sted!" cried Dick. "Arabi's army's comin' at two-forty speed up the river. Heered any news?"

"Oui," answered the Frenchman. "The Inglis' has broke camp. Dey vas all gone to Suez Canal. Coming down dis way," he pointed to

the east. "Arabi run to head him off. Oh! dere's great news. De battle field is shifted. Inglis at Ismaili. Egyptian off here. You stay vid me. No safe yet. Whole desert full of Egyptian. Bedouin everywhere. You stay here, and I keep watch. When coast clear yqu ride."

And so it was decided. The fugitives concluded to stay with the hospitable Frenchman until the two armies had become settled once more, when it might become safe to make a break across the desert for the English camp.

CHAPTER XII.

OVER THE BARREN LANDS.

On the morning of September 11th Bob and Dick rode out of the streets of Cairo. Their old host had concluded that the armies were now settled in camp, the roving parties drawn in, and that by making a wide flank movement around the Egyptian lines the fugitives might make a safe break for the English encampment.

Well furnished with provisions and water, and splendidly mounted, they rode out of the Egyptian city, glad to escape from its dangerous streets. The passage through those streets was not made in safety. Not two months ago Christians had been murdered there by the natives, and their fierce fanaticism was not yet allayed. Dick still looked much like an Egyptian boy, but there was no disguising old Bob, and they were hooted and stoned by the rabble as they rode through the streets. Mounted as they were it was with some difficulty they escaped injury. A howling crowd had gathered in their front. Stones began to fly in both directions. There was but one thing for it. Stirring up their horses to full speed they rode furiously down upon the cowardly crew. In an instant they were among them. Down went the natives in swaths before the plunging horses. The crowd broke and ran in wild fright. In less than a minute the danger was past. A dozen of the Egyptians lay stretched upon the ground, and with a shout of triumph the Americans rode briskly on, laughing at their discomfited foes.

"It's like a brace of seventy-fours through a fleet of porgy-fishers," declared old Bob. "Keep yer critter down to his work, Dick. 'Tain't safe sailin' round here."

"Yonder's the open country," cried Dick. "Guess we kin begin to whistle. There ain't a boss in that town that's got the bottom to foller us now."

It would, indeed, have been hard to overtake them. They had learned something of the art of riding an Arab horse, and the small, clean-limbed animals spurned the sands beneath their hoofs as they ran easily onward, with an easy, gliding, but very swift motion.

Stumbling over the rubbish heaps which surround the city, and passing lines of ancient tombs and mosques, it was not long ere they climbed the elevated boundary of the Nile valley, and struck the edge of the sandy desert beyond.

Their eyes had grown somewhat accustomed to the scene which now met them. A far-reaching level of hard sand and gravel, as smooth almost as a floor, and stretching out endlessly to the limits of the Red Sea. And it was an utterly unknown land to them. There were wells here and there but the chance was against their finding them. There was nothing for it but to ride rapidly onward, and trust to the provisions and water they brought with them. In less than two days they would strike the line of the Suez canal, or of the Red Sea.

"And if our hosses give out?" asked Dick, as he gave the rein to his steed.

"Then we'll have to foot it, that's all," answered the old sailor. "If we don't find a well the hosses

has got to git their sheer of the water. We'd best starve a bit ourselves than kill our beasts."

The sun shone warmly down on the desert as they rode onward at a rapid pace. The horses needed no urging. They had their native sands beneath their feet, and rushed onward as if they gloried in the free air and broad expanse surrounding.

Above them was the blue Egyptian sky, from which hardly a drop of rain falls throughout the year. Before them was utter desolation. As they rode onward they passed the whitened bones of many a camel, which had fallen and perished by the wayside of the caravan route.

"That's a mighty good idee," cried old Bob. "Them bones is better to sail by than the compass. They're like telegraph poles 'long the highway."

"If they don't plump us into the Egyptian camp," rejoined Dick.

All that day they rode onward. At night they camped upon the desert, with their saddles for pillows, and the sands for a bed. But the necessity of furnishing their horses as well as themselves with water quite exhausted their store of that necessary commodity, and when they resumed their desert ride the next morning their water skins were quite empty.

"Anyhow there's been a good drink all round," cried Dick. "And if we don't strike water to-day we'll reach the canal afore night. It ca. 't be more than fifty or sixty miles off."

Old Bob shook his head doubtfully.

"We're in strange seas," he remarked. "And it's hard to keep our bearin's. Howsomdever I've pulled through much wuss. Keep up your sperits, Dick."

"Ain't got no notion of lettin' 'em swag down," answered Dick.

Onward they rode, mile after mile. They had left the caravan track, and swerved to the south, for fear of being led into danger if they kept that course. There was nothing now but the compass and the sun to guide them, but the old sailor knew well the art of navigation, and laid his course as straight as if he had been sailing the Atlantic instead of crossing the desert.

Hour after hour passed by. The sun crept up to its noontide elevation, and commenced to glide down its westward slope. It was a hot and exhausting ride. Occasionally a breath of air swept across the plain, but the wind was hot, and bore before it clouds of fine sand that proved very annoying to the travelers. They began to feel intensely the need of water, while their horses showed signs of flagging under the scorching sunbeams.

"We'll be as dry as parchment afore night," remarked Dick.

"It's the hosses I'm thinkin' on," answered Bob. "The poor critters had hardly a mouthful for breakfast. They're staggerin' now. We must give 'em a rest if we lose two hours by it."

He drew rein to pull up his wearied horse. But the animal, instead of yielding, started off at increased speed, changing his course more to the northward.

"What ails the critters?" cried Dick, whose horse had shown the same perversity.

"I dunno," answered Bob, with a shake of his head. "It's a queer dodge."

"What's that ahead?" asked Dick, pointing.

"It's a palm tree, as I'm a sinner!" exclaimed the old man, with a glad outburst. "The hosses beat us hollow. Let out, little chap, bless yer sharpeyes. We're all right now." He patted the horse's neck affectionately.

It was a solitary palm. Soon it loomed out plainly against the clear sky, the desert signal for water ahead.

Within half an hour they reined in their horses beneath the solitary tree. A thin growth of grass at its foot also indicated water. A broad opening in the sandy surface, and six feet down the welcome gleam of water appeared, with a slope leading to its surface.

In a minute the thirsty travelers had quenched their thirst. Then the horses were led to the water's edge, and given a long, refreshing draught of the cool liquid. Bob and Dick now partook of a frugal meal beneath the palm tree's shade, while the horses cropped the scanty grass around its foot. For two hours they rested here. The sun was descending, and the heat had grown less extreme.

"Ain't it time we was slidin' on?" asked Dick.

"Guess so," rejoined Bob. "Hillo! We've got to be goin' now. And it's lucky the animiles is freshened up."

He pointed southward as he hastily sprung to his feet. Dick looked, and an exclamation broke from his lips as he saw a troop of Bedouins, the steel heads of their lances glistening in the sun, and not half a mile away. They were heading directly for the desert spring.

"It's qucer if we ain't got to let her rip now!" cried the alert boy, as he sprung for his horse.

Bob was already mounting his. The refreshed animals gayly curvetted as they rode out into the desert. They were good for another long run. But they had hardly struck the sands ere they were discovered by the desert riders, whose sharp eyes recognized the European dress at a glance. In a moment their easy trot broke into a headlong gallop, while the troop spread out to the west as if to cut off escape in that direction.

"We're in for it now!" cried Bob. "The beggars are arter us in solid airnest. The best hosses wins the race to day."

"And these critters has got to git up and git!" exclaimed Dick, as he shook his reins.

In a minute more the chase was in full play. The desert riders came on like the wind, spreading out far to the right, and urging their horses to their utmost speed. But the mettled steeds of the fugitives had caught the spirit of the chase. With a quick bound forward they settled down to their work, running with a long, loping stride, that seemed to fairly devour the sands beneath them. It was such a speed as the riders had never seen or dreamed of, and it took their breath as they rushed at lightning speed through the desert air.

"That's what I call goin'!" cried Dick, with a glad shout. "We've got the pick of their hosses. Talk about a race-course! 'Tain't no circumstance to this goin'!"

On came the pursuers, but there was no sign that they were gaining. Yet the experienced old sailor looked uneasily at their maneuver of extending their line to the west.

"There's some dodge in that," he remarked. "They're tryin' to drive us to the north'ard. We can't be far off from the latitude of the army. Wonder if they're tryin' to force us into the lines?"

"Let's streak west, and make a run for it," suggested Dick.

They had been running to the northwest. They now verged westward. It was a risky move, for it brought them in a line with the outermost Bedouins, whom it gave the advantage of a diagonal instead of a direct pursuit. Yet the fugitives had somewhat the best of it, and an hour's chase showed that they were gaining on their pursuers.

"Bully for us!" exclaimed Dick. "We've got the wind on 'em."

"What's that queer noise ahead?" asked the old sailor, doubtfully.

A slight ridge rose in front of them, succeeded by a depression in the valley level. In a moment they had topped the ascent. A cry of surprise and dismay broke from their lips as they did so. For in the hollow before them was picketed a troop of Egyptian dragoons, already on the alert from the sounds of the chase!

"Trapped, by thunder!" cried old Bob.

"Let's streak north!" exclaimed Dick.

"No go. The army lies there. We're in fur it, boy. Clean surrounded. Ain't a mouse-hole to git out, and we mought as well fling up the sponge."

Dick gritted his teeth as he reluctantly drew rein. There was no gainsaying old Bob's decision.

Behind them the Bedouins came on, with yells that were plainly audible. Before them rode up a group of cavalry officers, headed by a stout, full-faced man, with a long military mustache.

"Shoot me for a lubber, if it ain't Arabi hisself!" muttered Bob. "We're in for it now in some airnest."

He was right. It was the rebel general. A look of anger came into his face as he recognized old Bob.

"So," he cried, sarcastically, "this is your way of keeping your promises?"

"I've only jist found the boy," apologized the old sailor. "And ain't we makin' straight fur your camp?"

At this moment the head of the Bedouin troop came over the ridge. They were led by the old sheik whom the fugitives had so much reason to remember. A cry of delight came from his lips as he recognized his horse. He rode forward and grasped the bridle.

A hasty conversation in Arabic ensued, in which the old Bedouin seemed to be impressing the mind of the rebel leader. The latter now turned and spoke to some of the troopers behind him. These rode up and began stolidly to bind the hands of the prisoners.

"What's to be done with us?" asked old Bob.

"Hung to-morrow at daybreak," coldly answered Arabi.

"Hung? What for?" faltered the old sailor.

"Because you are robbers and spies, and because you deceived me about this boy's death, while he stands here alive and well."

The old man would have ventured some answer, but Arabi would listen to none. Two of the troopers grasped the bridles of the prisoners' horses and led them northward. Within an hour they found themselves in the lines of the Egyptian army. In fifteen minutes more they were safely confined in a guard-house, with a sentry at the door.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN AT THE DEATH.

On the eastern horizon a red gleam had just made its appearance, the herald of the coming day. Within the Egyptian camp at Tel-el-Kebir a busy stir was making itself evident. The army was rousing to the duties of the new day. The night watch still occupied the forts and outposts, and sentries moved stolidly to and fro on the lines of the intrenchments. All seemed as quiet and peaceful as on many previous mornings.

And yet there was something in the air that made a vague uneasiness in the camp. For it was the morning of the 13th of September, a day that was fated to be memorable in the annals of Egypt.

Had the Egyptian scouts done their duty there would have been a very different state of affairs in Arabi's camp. For all that night the English army had been stealthily marching. Now, as daylight approached, it was creeping forward through the gloom, like a tiger that crawls on its prey. Little did the rebel chief dream that before him, not half a mile away, a hostile army lay crouched in the darkness, and that every minute brought the threatening danger nearer his lines.

At the same time, in the corner of an earthwork, a scene was taking place in which we are more directly interested. For there stood the two American captives, their hands tied behind them, a rope around their necks, while above them stretched the beam upon which they were sentenced to suffer death.

They were surrounded by a group of savage-faced Arabs, among whom was the old Bedouin sheik, his face full of fierce gratification in the coming death of his foes.

"You will not steal an Arab horse soon again,"

he said, in his broken English. "Down on your knees, Yankees, and beg for mercy. Let me see you grovel like curs in the dust."

"I'd sooner beg of a whipped donkey than of a crop-eared cur like you," answered the old sailor. "If you think, you cowardly dog, that Americans don't know how to die, and that they are going to whine at the sight of a rope's end, then you don't know the stock, that's all."

Dick was pale at his approaching fate, but there was no more flinch in him than in his old companion.

"I ain't had sich a high old time down here, but what I'm ready to take my chances up above. So jerk away and be done with it, old dry bones!"

With a cry of anger at this epithet the old chief gave an order to the Arabs that held the rope. In an instant Dick was jerked from the ground, and hung by his neck ten feet in the air. A scowl of triumph marked the sheik's face.

"Your turn next," he cried to Bob as he prepared to gloat over the dying agonies of the boy.

But two very unexpected circumstances happened to interfere with his amusement. Dick's hands had been imperfectly tied, and in his struggle one of them became loose. In an instant he grasped the rope above his head, and took off the strangling strain from his neck.

The other circumstance was still more important. As if his hanging had been a prearranged signal, at the very instant that he was drawn up the silence of the morning was broken by a thunder of alarming sounds.

There came a rifle-shot; then a volley; then the roar of cannon. A bugle-sound rose from the Egyptian camp, while the troops rushed confusedly to their stations. There came an answering bugle-call from the gloom beyond. The shots increased in number. Then, with a wild "hurrah," a long line of troops broke into view, shouting like furies, and rushing at headlong speed for the earthworks of the Egyptian camp.

From behind came the roar of cannon, and death-dealing balls surged into the crowded Egyptian lines. A fierce volley of rifle-bullets answered from the forts, but the English came forward, with set bayonets, and without a shot in reply.

Meanwhile the hanging party had broken, and fled for their lives, leaving Dick dangling from the rope, and Bob, with bound hands, a moment respite.

The boy clung to the rope as long as he could with his one loose hand. But at length his strength gave way, and it was with a groan of anguish that the old sailor saw his hand loosen, and the strain come again upon his neck.

"Oh! hang on! Hang on!" he yelled. "Five minutes, Dick! Only five minutes, and the British lads will be in the fort."

It was in vain. The boy's strength was gone. He seemed doomed to death in the very face of the approaching safety.

But Providence had ruled otherwise, for at that very instant a plunging six-pound ball struck the beam above his head, and plunging along its surface, cut the rope like a sharp knife.

Down with a thud came the strangely-rescued boy to the earth.

A minute he lay, gasping for breath, while the color slowly returned to his bloodless cheeks. Then he rose to his feet, staggering slightly as he did so.

"Good as fifty dead men yit," he muttered, with all his old vim. "Got a knife, Bob? I've got one hand loose, and will be free in a jiffy."

While this was going on the English regiments were rushing at double quick time into the heart of the Egyptian fire. Down went their front ranks before that plunging rain of balls, but with marvelous discipline they forbore to reply. "Bayonet only," was the word, and on they came, with a wild hurrah as they struck the foot of the forts. Without a pause they swarmed up the steep face of the earthworks, into the rain of balls that showered

upon them. It was not twenty minutes from the first alarm shot, and now, with a leap and a shout, the British bull-dogs were among the armed Egyptians, and bullet and bayonet were doing their work.

Never was a war more quickly ended. For a short interval the Egyptians faced their foes. But the surprise, the confusion and alarm, and the hundreds of men that were falling before the English arms, were too much for their endurance. A few minutes' endurance, and then they broke and fled in utter dismay, pursued by a torrent of rifle balls, and by the shouting and yelling lines of the British infantry.

All this had passed so quickly that Dick had not yet found a knife with which to release himself and his companion, when the English swarmed into the fort, and the Egyptians swarmed out of it.

"Hold yer horses, neighbor!" yelled Dick, as a soldier rushed at him with leveled bayonet.

"Blast ye, can't ye see we're yer own stripe?" screamed old Bob. "Ye're jist in time to save us from being hung by the bloody Arabs. Lend a knife now. Cut us loose, and we'll fight like dogs for Queen Vic."

At the sound of his own language the soldier changed his hostile design. He dropped his musket, and drawing a knife, in a moment the two prisoners were free.

"Snatch a rifle and hafter 'em, boys," he cried. "Pay 'em up for 'anging you. Follow the bloody Twelfth."

Seizing his musket, he ran forward after his company, leaving the released prisoners to follow at leisure.

"I'd like to git even with that old sheik," cried Dick, as he picked up the rifle of a dead Egyptian.

Bob similarly armed himself, and the two friends ran forward, as full of fight as the English troops.

In some other portions of the Egyptian lines the surprise had been less successful. The native troops held their ground better, and a hard hand-to-hand fight took place. In one redoubt, near which Bob and Dick quickly found themselves, a strong detachment of Bedouins had been stationed, who were fighting with the tenacity of lions when the two friends approached.

"There's our meat!" cried Dick. "Them's the hounds that we're arter! And see that English flag! Bless me if it ain't our old friends, the English Infantry!"

"And your uncle among 'em likely. Come on, my boy. Ye're old enough to take a hand in a fight."

It was a hard struggle that was going on before them. Bullet for bullet; Arab yell for English shout; Bedouin spear for British bayonet. Dead and wounded were dropping like leaves on all sides and the groans of the dying feebly echoed the fierce cries of the combatants.

Dick had never seen a fight before, and for the moment his heart sunk as he heard the terrible groans and felt the splashing blood. But he was excited and revengeful, and the spirit of the tiger rose in him as he caught sight of the face of his old enemy in the throng.

"There's the sheik, Bob," he cried. "Let's go for the old hound."

He was there indeed; in the front of the Bedouin band, fighting like a madman, his face purple with fury and excitement. Before him was a tall English officer, sword in hand, cheering on his men. He turned partly and Dick caught a glimpse of his face. It was his uncle, Captain Pearson.

The captain had caught a glimpse of Dick's face at the same instant, and a cry of surprise broke from his lips as he struck at a foeman before him. It was an unlucky blow, for his foot slipped in a pool of blood and he fell headlong on a heap of dead beneath him.

A yell of triumph broke from the old sheik's lips. Shortening his long spear he sprung forward and

poised the dangerous weapon over the fallen officer: It seemed as if Captain Pearson was doomed—as if nothing could save him.

But at that instant there came the sharp crack of a rifle-shot, and the Bedouin chief staggered, dropped his spear, clapped his hand to his breast and fell headlong. He had been shot through the heart.

The fatal bullet came from Dick's rifle. His desire for revenge was sharpened with fear for his uncle's life, as he pressed his finger to the trigger with a quick aim.

Dropping his weapon he sprung forward to his uncle's assistance, and was helping him to his feet when a cry of triumph rose from the English. The Bedouins were in full flight. The fall of their chief had spread a sudden panic in their ranks, and they broke and fled, followed hotly by the triumphant English troops.

This was the last stand that was made. Not half an hour had elapsed since the first wild rush on the earth-works was made, and victory was already declared. The Egyptian army was everywhere in flight, followed by volleys from the infantry, by the swords of the rushing cavalry, and by the plunging balls of the light artillery. Fifteen hundred of them lay dead and wounded on the field, while scarce three hundred of the English had fallen.

"I caught your face, my boy, in the throng," cried Captain Pearson, as he regained his feet. "I owe you my life, for I saw the Arab fall before your shot."

"I done my prettiest," answered Dick, modestly.

"You are my American nephew. I knew you at a glance. But how came you here? I thought you were in England."

"That's too long a story for jist now," answered Dick. "And as fur savin' your life, we're square on that, fur you saved mine."

"How? I do not understand you."

"That's another long story," replied the boy. "I s'pose you want to foller the regiment. My story will do arter you're done choppin' down Egyptians."

"I fancy there is enough of them killed now," the captain answered. "They will not make head again, and there is no need of useless slaughter. I treated you badly in England, my poor boy. You have a double claim on me now, and I won't forget you."

"You're a gentleman, Captain Pearson," cried old Bob, with enthusiasm.

"Ah! Who is this?"

"That's old Bob Backstay. We've sailed together, fought together, and pretty near hung together. I calkerlate we'll keep on hangin' together."

The officer gave a long look to Bob's honest face.

"You will do," he said, holding out his hand to the sturdy old tar. "Come with me after my company. I will not lose sight of you until I have heard that story."

They hurried on after the flying Egyptians, and the pursuing English army.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RIDE INTO CAIRO.

THROUGH all that day the pursuit of the flying Egyptians continued. Troops of English cavalry rode rapidly over the desert without a shadow of opposition, for their foe was utterly broken and overcome.

The main body of the Arabs had fled to Zagazig, an important railway station in the desert. Thither the English cavalry and flying artillery swiftly followed. Another English troop rode southwestward over the desert, toward Cairo, the rebel capital. At the head of this troop rode Bob and Dick, our two friends. They had been lucky enough to recover their horses, and the word having passed that they had just crossed the desert from Cairo, they were pressed into the service as guides.

All that day they rode, following the caravan route, which old Bob had recovered with a sailor's

true instinct. At night they bivouacked by the side of a desert well, which lay, with its signal group of palms, on their route.

The next day had well advanced when they caught sight of the hilly barriers of the Nile valley. Soon the slight elevation was topped, and a shout of delight broke from the troop as their eyes fell upon the scene before them.

There, in the distance lay the great river, the historic Nile, winding lazily onward, through a valley that was half filled with its overflowing waters. Somewhat to the south gleamed the domes and minarets of the Arab city, as the rays of the declining sun fell on their gilded tops. And afar off, down the Nile valley, a conical peak, as of a distant mountain, faintly appeared, blue in the remote distance.

"What is that?" asked the leader of the troop, with his glass to his eye.

"The great Pyramid," answered Bob. "And this before you is the old city of Cairo. Egypt, old and young, lies before you, gentlemen."

With a cry of delight the soldiers put spurs to their horses, and plunged down the slope to the valley level. It was as the old sailor had said. Egypt was theirs.

In two hours afterward they rode into the city of Cairo, not a shot being fired in defense of the rebel capital. The streets indeed were thronged with people to see the English troop pass, and though there were many savage looks, yet there were shouts of welcome also. Evidently Arabi's rule had not united all Egypt in harmony.

Our two friends were not long in hunting up their old host, who gave a cry of surprise and delight on seeing them safe before him.

"What has happened?" he cried. "Dere's all sort of reports."

"Arabi's bu'sted, that's all," exclaimed Dick. "We had a finger in the pie. And we've come here to see it baked."

A cry of gratification broke from the old Frenchman.

"Zen one can walk in the street without getting his throat cut? And I'm so happy as never vas to see you again, mine friends. Come you in! Come you right in and tell me all about it."

Cairo was like anything but a conquered city. Not a drop of blood was shed, not an ounce of plunder taken. The English troop quietly took possession of the city; but there was not a moment's hindrance to the ordinary business of the place.

The inhabitants, many of whom had looked upon the entrance of the hostile soldiery with deadly fear, were now overcome with surprise and gratitude. This was not the Eastern way of making war. Where was the plunder, the bloodshed, the fire and ruin, which were the ancient companions of warfare? The world had indeed changed.

Toward evening the old Frenchman rushed into the room in which his two guests were resting after their long ride, and enjoying the first good meal they had had for three days.

"It's all done! Ze war's all done!" he cried. "Arabi is prisoner! They all is prisoner! Thank ze stars it's all done, and we're all alive!"

"Then the boot's on t'other foot," cried old Bob. "He tried to hang us, the old rebel. Maybe he'll find that there's nicer neckties than a rope around a man's neck."

"I ain't right sure that I'm alive yet," said Dick, comically feeling his throat. "I know I was nearer kingdom come than I want to be afore my reg'lar peggin'-out time comes round."

The next morning, with the inspiring movement of the fife and the rolling rattle of the drum, an infantry regiment marched into the conquered city. Fine, bronzed, hearty fellows they were, with the flush of victory in their faces and their tread as regular and even as though on parade. Steadily and proudly they marched on through the thronged streets, with waving flags and glittering arms.

"As sure as you live it's the gallant Eighth!" exclaimed Dick, in delight. "And there's my uncle! There's Captain Pearson! Hurra!" and Dick flung his cap into the air with a shout that brought all eyes upon him, and stirred up an answering cheer from the marching soldiery. It was the first time in the history of old Cairo that a genuine British hurrah had sounded in its streets, and the very walls seemed to listen in surprise to the unwonted sound.

"Come here, my boy," called Captain Pearson. "So you got to Cairo before us, it seems!"

"You bet!" answered Dick, with Yankee flavor. "Bob and me led the advance. Come ahead, Bob. If we are Americans we ain't too proud to march with British soldiers. Guess they're our fust cousins."

A smile of amusement came upon Captain Pearson's face at Dick's words.

Two hours afterward the regiment was quartered upon the town, and our two friends were seated in a comfortable apartment with Captain Pearson, telling the story of their Egyptian adventures.

"And now I've got to sail back for my ship," exclaimed Bob.

"And me too, cried Dick. "Ain't finished my cruise in the Wildwing yet."

"You are too late," rejoined Captain Pearson. "The Wildwing sailed for America more than a week ago."

"And left us like two orphans, without a berth, a crust, or a home!"

"Not so," answered the kindly officer. "This boy is my sister's son, and my nearest relative. And if he was nothing to me he has saved my life. I am wealthy. I don't fancy that either of you will want while I have the power to help you, for I owe old Bob Backstay a debt of gratitude for his kindness to my nephew. As for you, Dick, you are decidedly a rough diamond, but I imagine you will polish into shape."

"There's many a rough nut with a sweet kernel," declared Bob.

"An' I dunno as I've done anything 'cept to brag up Amerisy," exclaimed Dick. "And I'll never back down on that while a thread of the stars and stripes hangs together."

A smile came to the captain's lips, as he warmly pressed the hand of the enthusiastic young patriot.

And so we leave them, still in Egypt, for the Eighth Infantry is yet stationed there, and Captain Pearson has taken such a fancy to his young nephew that he will not lose sight of him. There is something to his liking in the fresh American flavor of the lad, and Dick the stowaway, is in far different circumstances to-day, than when we first saw him in the ship's hold, fighting for his toes with the rats.

THE END.

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